

Pope Francis and Laudato Si': An Evaluation of Papal Influence in Global Environmental Policy

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Abstract

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In June of 2015, Pope Francis published what would become, with regard to international politics, arguably the most impactful papal encyclical in recent times. Francis's encyclical letter, *Laudato Si'*, discusses the scientific and moral causes that are responsible for the onset of modern climate change. Six months later, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, UNFCCC, convened in Paris to negotiate the most comprehensive environmental agreement since the Kyoto Protocol, The Paris Agreement.

During the six months in between these two events, Pope Francis and his administration promoted *Laudato Si'* and its message concerning environmental action. Francis himself travelled to many nations and met with numerous world leaders and governing bodies. In this time, Francis was praised by many politicians (and criticized by some) for the ideas in his encyclical and accounted for an enormous amount of public interest. Additionally, at the environmental conference in Paris, the 21st Conference of Parties to the UNFCCC, COP 21, Francis and *Laudato Si'* were mentioned explicitly by several heads of state in their addresses to the COP.

Pope Francis's political activity, international travel, influence at COP 21, and the attention he received from politicians, media, and the general public were all exceedingly high in comparison to previous popes. This thesis seeks to answer the following questions: Given that the four popes immediately before Francis discussed environmental issues, why is that Pope Francis and *Laudato Si'* received so much attention? What effects did Pope Francis ultimately have on global environmental policy? What type of power does the modern Catholic Church and the modern pope wield? How can we measure these somewhat nebulous ideas of power and influence? Ultimately, what kind of influence can a religious organization, specifically the Catholic Church, have on policymaking?

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Chapter One: The Catholic Church—Then and Now

In 1095, at the Council of Clermont, Pope Urban II passionately called for a crusade to reclaim Jerusalem for Christianity. Though the German emperor and the French and English kings were excommunicated at the time, they saw the crusade as an opportunity to simultaneously reestablish themselves in the pope's good graces and exercise the power of their overpopulated communities to expand their influence. Caliph Hakim's Turkish empire was persecuting Christians by confiscating property, enforcing self-identifying dress, and burning churches and crucifixes. These circumstances lay the foundation for the beginning of the first crusade. Enthusiasm to participate had reached such an apogee—out of a desire both to extirpate the Muslims and to plunder rich cities—that parish priests were required to approve the enrollees. Prior to battle, all soldiers received blessings and were warned that the punishment for desertion was excommunication.¹ Despite the self-proclaimed righteousness surrounding the Crusades, they are not very holy wars. It is unlikely that the church's method for vetting soldiers produced men of strong moral standing. Similarly, although the European leaders likely did believe that it was just to fight Islam, they did so for reasons of power, not morality. Questionable moral leadership notwithstanding, the Catholic Church held—and I assert that it still holds—an enormous amount of power and influence. A millennium ago, with the help of prevailing geopolitical circumstances, the pope called for an army to be raised and hundreds of thousands of men gathered with weapons and armor.²

¹ Vidmar, 124-128

² Hindley, 3

Clearly, the church's power is different now than it was then. In lieu of raising armies to fight far-flung battles, the Church influences the spiritual beliefs of a body of more than one billion Catholics that has a presence in the majority of the countries on the planet.³ This extensive network allows church leaders, and above all, the pope, to introduce ideas to a large and diverse body of people. The influence of church doctrine has serious social and economic implications. Unlike the straightforward seizure of lands or riches from a millennium before, it is not entirely clear today what form this influence takes or what effects it has. Past popes have focused on theological issues, humanitarian crises, and social reform. Pope John Paul II fought tirelessly against the expansion of communism.⁴ Pope Francis, an Argentine Jesuit, succeeded Pope Benedict XVI—a notably brilliant theologian and strong ecclesiastical conservative. Many issues plague the Catholic Church—oftentimes self-inflicted—and for this reason, papacies can have entirely different focuses depending on who the elected pontiff is. Although Francis does not fight communism like John Paul II did, his early papacy seems to indicate that he shares John Paul's proclivity for political action.

In June 2015, roughly two years into Francis's papacy, he published an encyclical letter entitled *Laudato Si'*. An encyclical is a papal document whose traditional purpose is to instruct the body of the church on some important topic. They are usually about the length of a short book and can address a wide range of topics. *Laudato Si'* discusses the physical, economic, and social causes of climate change as well as the steps Francis believes are necessary to help remedy the diverse negative consequences. Six months after *Laudato Si'* was published, the world political community gathered to address climate change at a conference in Paris. This meeting,

³ Catholic Hierarchy 2017, <http://www.catholic-hierarchy.org/country/sc1.html>

⁴ Applebaum, The Washington Post 2005, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A28398-2005Apr5.html>

organized by the United Nations Framework Conference on Climate Change, UNFCCC, produced the most comprehensive climate agreement since the 1997 Kyoto Protocol.

The ideas in *Laudato Si'* are completely complementary to the ideas in this climate agreement—the Paris Agreement. Acceptance of and agreement with the concepts in Francis's encyclical by the global community—especially by foreign leaders and governments—would certainly lead to a more thorough support of the Paris Agreement. This reality is not a coincidence. As I will discuss in detail, from the day the Vatican released *Laudato Si'* up until the day that the Parisian conference began, Pope Francis and his administration actively and relentlessly promoted his encyclical. The administration distributed thousands of copies of the encyclical to numerous countries and Francis traveled to three different continents to speak on the urgency of environmental action. *Laudato Si'* quickly became one of the most extensively-read encyclicals in history, both with regard to the total number of readers and the number of countries in which it was read. This influence affected the world of global politics in several ways. Many politicians and world leaders praised Francis and *Laudato Si'* during the buildup to the 21st conference of the parties to the UNFCCC (COP 21). Through this praise and Francis's embrace of the poor and those marginalized by climate change, the pope became an environmental talisman behind whom heads of state and ambassadors rallied to fight climate change. At COP 21, six heads of state or their representatives mentioned Pope Francis explicitly in their addresses to the conference. They praised his call to environmental action and cited his encyclical as evidence of the importance of the nascent Paris Agreement. This series of events is a testament to the type of power that the modern church wields. It may not command armies anymore, but through Pope Francis and *Laudato Si'*, it garnered massive support for COP 21 and actively influenced international policy making.

In this thesis, I first will summarize the content and politically noteworthy aspects of *Laudato Si'* and the Paris Agreement. After this summary, I will compare the two documents to reveal the relationships between their political aims. It is my hope that an understanding of the relation between *Laudato Si'* and the Paris Agreement will provide context for the environmental problem we currently face and, more importantly, serve as evidence as to why Pope Francis became so involved in international politics and suggest how his involvement could have affected the UN's negotiations. Second, I will analyze the statements of several countries from three UNFCCC meetings. Pope Francis and the Catholic Church are mentioned substantially more at the COP following the release of *Laudato Si'*; I will argue that this phenomenon is evidence of Francis's influence. Third, I will describe Francis's extensive promotion of *Laudato Si'* following its publication and provide a summary of the reaction that it received from various communities. I aim to prove that Francis pushed the promotion of his encyclical thoroughly and that several groups appear to have had reactions directly to his advocacy of the importance of addressing climate change—reactions that were not guided by independently determined partisan stances. Finally, I will offer several ways of measuring the strength of Francis's effects. Through analyzing the popularity of *Laudato Si'* relative to other encyclicals, comparing developmental and demographic statistics from the nations that mentioned Francis at COP 21, and categorizing the reactions to his encyclical, I hope to provide a clearer understanding of the scope of Francis and *Laudato Si'*'s influential power.

Chapter Two: The Two Environmental Documents

When the United States Congress (or any legislative body) writes a bill, it typically contains several standard components. The first element is the law itself; the desired implementation or change. Next, the bill outlines the implementation of the desired policy. Third, the bill contains an enforcement mechanism (e.g., economic incentives, auditing bodies, etc.). Lastly, there must be some way to pay for the implementation and enforcement of the desired policy. While naïvely simple, this summary provides a concise visualization of one means of exercising political power to effect change. Other forms of policy include executive orders, court orders, and peace treaties. These templates have taken many forms: the U.S. Constitution, the Twelve Tables from the Roman Republic, or the Treaty of Versailles just to name a few. At the most fundamental level, a policy is a written work that prescribes some sort of behavior on some group of people. Collectively, policies—backed by courts, federal police, moral pressure, armies, or societal norms—form the basis of organized life. Although *Laudato Si'* is a religious work of literature, it functions to influence environmental policy.

Laudato Si' has received attention from a large number of major news outlets—*The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Washington Post*, *BBC News*, *CNN*, etc.—for being a forceful doctrine that addresses the growing threat of climate change and the exploitation of developing nations.⁵ In an effort to spread Francis's message to different cultures, the Vatican

⁵ Rocca, *The Wall Street Journal* 2015, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/pope-delivers-powerful-message-on-climate-change-1434621606>, Goodstein and Gillis, *The New York Times* 2015, <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2015/06/18/world/europe/encyclical-laudato-si.html>, Faiola, Boorstein, and Mooney, *The Washington Post* 2015, https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/how-pope-franciss-not-yet-official-document-on-climate-change-is-already-stirring-controversy/2015/06/17/ef4d46be-14fe-11e5-9518-f9e0a8959f32_story.html?utm_term=.76569f7ef6cb, Harrabin, *BBC News* 2015, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world->

translated the encyclical in eight different languages (English, Spanish, Italian, French, German, Polish, Arabic, and Portuguese).⁶ Ambassadors from around the globe attended the release of the document, which ultimately made its way to more than one hundred countries.⁷ Fast-forward to December 2016. Half a year after *Laudato Si'* was released, the UNFCCC met in France to debate a major progression of environmental policy. Upon completion of the negotiations, the COP dubbed their accord the Paris Agreement. This pseudo-treaty provides a framework for industrialized nations to reduce carbon emissions, develop clean-energy technology both in industrialized and developing nations, and assist developing nations as they adapt to the adverse conditions brought about by climate change. Although both documents aim to fight climate change, they are two entirely different pieces of political policy. Ultimately, *Laudato Si'* aims to spark global dialogue about the problem of climate change and to introduce a new moral mindset to our treatment of the Earth. In this way, Francis's encyclical is not so much a traditional law or treaty as it is a lobbying effort. In contrast, the purpose of the Paris Agreement is to provide a relatively specific and binding accord that encourages national governments to take ambitious action to reduce their negative environmental impact and help support developing nations. The forms of these two documents reflect their objectives and audiences. Pope Francis wrote an overarching encyclical to bring conversation of the moral and physical problems of climate change to the public. The UNFCCC negotiated a contractual agreement that developed and developing countries may ratify in a joint effort to take physical steps to fight climate change.

europa-33182065, Burke, CNN 2015, <http://www.cnn.com/2015/06/18/world/pope-francis-climate-technology-encyclical/>

⁶ Rocca, The Wall Street Journal 2015

⁷ O'Connell, The Jesuit Review 2015, <http://www.americamagazine.org/content/dispatches/history-made-pope-francis-encyclical-presented-vatican> and Lefevere, The National Catholic Reporter 2016, <https://www.ncronline.org/preview/vatican-diplomat-promotes-laudato-si>

Although neither of these documents prescribe specific laws or regulations for any one country, they both aim to change our current approach to caring for the environment and combating climate change. Given the similarities in their themes, a close comparison can help explain who the target audiences are and why they are being targeted. If we understand the effects of these documents, we can better determine both which previous actions may have influenced their creation and which subsequent actions may be attributed to their influence. More specifically, we may be able to determine the places where it is possible for *Laudato Si'* to have influenced the Paris Agreement. It is improbable that the language of the Paris Agreement was derived from *Laudato Si'* or that Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon kept a copy of the encyclical on hand during the negotiations. Most likely, nothing of the sort happened. However, a more thorough understanding of the content of these two documents will clarify the ideas that Francis and the COP want to see implemented. As will be discussed in length later, Francis and his administration actively promoted *Laudato Si'* in the time after its release and before the conference in Paris. At the point when Francis promotes ideas that are entirely complementary (if not identical) to the ideas voiced in Paris, he becomes both a priest preaching moral lessons and a politician spreading support for a governmental policy.

In this chapter, I first describe the contents of *Laudato Si'*. Second, I delineate the sections of the Paris Agreement. In the third, and most important section, I compare and contrast the intended audiences and purposes of these documents in order to gain better insight into Francis's motivation to influence environmental policy and the way in which he might do so.

I. Laudato Si'

Pope Francis (as evidenced by the fact that no Roman numerals follow his name) is the first pope to take the name of the legendary saint from Assisi. St. Francis was famous for his rejection of normal society, embrace of nature and poverty, and charismatic service of the poor and weak. Pope Francis based the title of his encyclical on a repeated line from one of St. Francis's most famous compositions, *The Canticle of the Sun*: "Laudato Si, mi Signore."⁸ This Latin phrase means "Praise be to You, my Lord." In St. Francis's canticle, he praises God for all of the natural beauty in life: the sun, the moon, water, fire, and even death. Pope Francis's encyclical has a different purpose, but the resonance is palpable. Francis addresses a litany of different subjects and a host of different audiences in *Laudato Si'*. Despite the diversity of subject matter, Francis's overall purpose is to impart on the world—public and private alike—the importance and urgency of recognizing and combating the onset of climate change.

Addressing the Public

In the following sections, I will argue that Pope Francis addresses three main audiences in *Laudato Si'*: the general public, the communities of international governments, and the community of the Catholic Church. Given that Pope Francis is the head of the Catholic Church, *Laudato Si'* is likely to be received more eagerly by Christians than by non-Christians, but Francis nonetheless wants religious and non-religious alike to read the encyclical and hear its message.⁹ When Pope Francis addresses the public, he does so with several motives. The first motive is explanatory; many people are not aware of the scientific foundation of climate change or of the severity of the threat that it poses to the Earth. For example, in the first chapter, "What

⁸ Francis, 9

⁹ Ibid., 16

is Happening to Our Common Home,” Pope Francis informs the readers that the adverse effects we are experiencing are due mainly to human causes: “It is true that there are other factors (such as volcanic activity, variations in the Earth’s orbit and axis, the solar cycle) yet a number of scientific studies indicate that most global warming in recent decades is due to the great concentration of greenhouse gases...released mainly as a result of human activity.”¹⁰ With regard to public opinion, a substantial portion of the world is not convinced of the danger that climate change poses to the world or of the extent to which human activity has aggravated these effects. According to the Pew Research Center—a non-partisan think tank headquartered in Washington D.C.—in many developed nations, The United States, China, Russia, and Britain to name a few, less than half of the population believes that climate change is a serious problem.¹¹ Pope Francis—recognizing this widespread presence of skepticism—aims to convince his audience of the gravity of climate change as well as of the responsibility that mankind bears for these effects.

One of the primary themes in this encyclical is Francis’s dedication to inform the public that climate change is a real occurrence and that it is our unsustainable industrial activity that is the primary cause. Pope Francis informs the public that climate change is real, and he also warns that the consequences of this threat are *serious*:

Warming has effects on the carbon cycle. It creates a vicious circle which aggravates the situation even more, affecting the availability of essential resources like drinking water, energy and agricultural production in warmer regions leading to the extinction of part of the planet’s biodiversity. The melting in the polar ice caps and in high altitude plains can lead to dangerous release of methane gas, while the decomposition of frozen organic material can further increase the emission of carbon dioxide. Things are made worse by the loss of tropical forests which would otherwise help to mitigate climate change. Carbon dioxide pollution further increases the acidification of the oceans and compromises the marine food chain. If present trends continue, this century may well

¹⁰ Francis, 24

¹¹ Wike, Pew Research Center 2016, <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/04/18/what-the-world-thinks-about-climate-change-in-7-charts/>

witness extraordinary climate change and an unprecedented destruction of ecosystems, with serious consequences for all of us. A rise in the sea level, for example, can create extremely serious situations, if we consider that a quarter of the world's population lives on a coast or nearby and that a majority of our megacities are situated in coastal areas.¹²

Pope Francis first reveals several of the ways that environmental damage has altered the overall climate of the Earth and then describes how those consequences will have serious effects on our lives. He follows this explanatory pattern to expose his audience to the real and specific consequences that result from climate change and that these consequences can have a genuinely serious impact on our lives. Throughout *Laudato Si'*, Francis provides scientifically based examples of the reality and seriousness of climate change in an attempt to show both that climate change is real and that its threat is severe.

It seems that Pope Francis's second purpose when addressing the general public is to teach the public why, from a social perspective, they should care about climate change and how it came to be in the first place. According to Pope Francis, important theological and moral reasons should compel us to care for the earth, and certain fundamental lifestyle choices that we are making allow for the kind of unsustainable industrial activity that has created the environmental situation that now exists. In the chapter, "The Gospel of Creation," Francis investigates the biblical origin of our relationship with the Earth: "[In Genesis] 'Tilling' refers to cultivating, ploughing or working, while 'keeping' means caring, protecting, overseeing and preserving. This implies a relationship of mutual responsibility between human beings and nature."¹³ Francis teaches that although God created the Earth for man, he did not create it for us to deplete at our leisure. Both tilling and keeping are essential in order to live in unity with our planet—an excess of either one will result in an imbalance. The Earth provides us with many

¹² Francis, 25

¹³ Ibid., 51

invaluable resources that we should utilize, but we should also protect and preserve our planet. It is important to understand that the animals, plants and resources that inhabit the Earth are not good solely because they are useful.

Francis carefully addresses this utilitarian idea: “We can speak of the priority of *being* over the priority of *being useful*’ ... Each of the various creatures, willed in its own being, reflects in its own way a ray of God’s infinite wisdom and goodness.”¹⁴ In this way, it is vital to understand that because of the equality of our creation, we must recognize the worth that exists in every being. All that we have, we were given, and although some creatures or resources are more useful than others, we cannot dismiss the worth of something just because it is not as functional or convenient to us. The previous two examples deal directly with man’s attitude towards the Earth, but Francis’s message is not limited to this subject.

In the last chapter of *Laudato Si*’, “Ecological Education & Spirituality,” he discusses the harmful mentalities that we have adapted from a less theological perspective. As a response to the unhealthy consumption that Francis describes, he offers the following lesson: “In reality, those who enjoy more and live better each moment are those who have given up dipping here and there, always on the look-out for what they do not have. They experience what it means to appreciate each person and each thing, learning familiarity with the simplest things and how to enjoy them. So they are able to shed unnecessary needs.”¹⁵ This excerpt is not based on climate science or the Bible but rather on moral logic. Francis asserts that happiness comes not from an unceasingly pursuit for the maximum amount of enjoyment and possessions but rather from an ability to presently enjoy and appreciate the goodness of the people and objects that we come

¹⁴ Francis, 52

¹⁵ Ibid., 149

into contact with. In this way, Pope Francis appears to be directly preaching to the readers of his encyclical, just like a priest would do during a Sunday sermon.

Francis's extensive exposition and teaching shows his desire for the lay person to understand not only how the Earth is threatened, but why it is important to protect the Earth in the first place. Francis is trying to educate the world about the importance of the Earth as a resource and blessing, the worth of every person and creature, and how our well-intended drive for success and happiness can blind us and cause us to overlook the less powerful or economically advantageous aspects of the earth—abiotic resources, animals, and humans.

Addressing Persons in Power

Although it is important for every person to play their part in the fight against climate change, it cannot be denied that some people have more power to influence change than others. I believe that *Laudato Si'* is simultaneously aimed at the government officials and diplomats across the world, and that Pope Francis's message for them is different than his message for the general public. Although Francis surely does want the members of international governments to read *Laudato Si'* in the way that an objective reader would, he has several messages specifically for them. First, he calls for international discussion and action concerning climate change. To augment his appeal for action against climate change, Francis lists several key areas of concern that he thinks are pivotal to address in order to begin to alleviate the effects that are plaguing the Earth.

On several occasions, Francis speaks almost directly to the international community. At the end of his introduction chapter, "Praise Be to You," Francis summarizes his call for action and criticizes past agreements: "I urgently appeal, then, for a new dialogue about how we are shaping the future of our planet... Regrettably, many efforts to seek concrete solutions to the environmental crisis have proved ineffective, not only because of powerful opposition but

because of a more general lack of interest.”¹⁶ The message here is clear: The action taken by the past committees is not sufficient. This problem is serious and if we want to honestly address it, we must take new action.

In addition to his criticism of past action, Francis describes certain elements that an agreement must have in order to be successful. He writes about the enforceability of any type of treaty: “Enforceable international agreements are urgently needed, since local authorities are not always capable of effective intervention. Relations between states must be respectful of each other’s sovereignty but must also lay down mutually agreed means of averting regional disasters.”¹⁷ According to Pope Francis, if the international community creates any sort of agreement, it must be enforceable. This advice is not only a guideline for future action, but also a reminder that past treaties have been ineffective because of their lack of power to enforce the terms of the agreement.

Although Pope Francis expresses throughout *Laudato Si’* his intent to initiate global dialogue, he frequently gives his personal advice on specific policies and international agreement procedures. In Francis’s second to last chapter, “Lines of Approach and Action,” he appears to describe the scope that a new treaty should have. Francis writes that “The limits which a healthy, mature, and sovereign society must impose are those related to foresight and security, regulatory norms, timely enforcement, the elimination of corruption, effective responses to undesired side-effects of production processes and appropriate intervention where potential or uncertain risks are involved.”¹⁸ Francis is describing how a “healthy, mature, and sovereign society” must govern their people. This language is somewhat ambiguous because of the use of the words

¹⁶ Francis, 17

¹⁷ Ibid., 117

¹⁸ Ibid., 120

“sovereign society,” but it can be reasonably assumed that Pope Francis would want any international agreement to be able to impose these limits. While it is not perfectly clear whom Francis is addressing with these comments, it is clear that he believes international action is necessary and that he wants to advise those that have the power to take direct action.

Although in the previous quote Francis speaks directly about the necessary elements of an international agreement, most of his commentary takes the form of suggestions. Throughout *Laudato Si'*, Francis deviates from his more general didactic purpose to suggest new policies. These suggestions, while sometimes seeming to be addressed to the general public, mostly appear to be topics that, according to Francis, governing bodies, both national and international, should consider when creating new environmental policies. For example, according to Francis, “One particularly serious problem is the quality of water available to the poor.”¹⁹ Francis remarks that “Our world has a grave social debt towards the poor who lack access to drinking water, because *they are denied the right to a life consistent with their inalienable dignity* [of having water to drink]. This debt can be paid partly by an increase in funding to provide clean water and sanitary services among the poor.”²⁰ Earlier, we saw Francis inform his readers about the issues that plague the world as a result of our environmental abuse. This type of comment is different. In it, Pope Francis is not just reporting a problem but also suggesting one way this problem may be solved. This type of solution appears to be aimed much more at policy makers (as they are the ones with the power to consider and implement such suggestions). It is important to note that although Francis continuously proposes policy changes—in this instance, an increase in water and sanitary service funding where necessary—Francis rarely insists that his proposed solutions *must* be followed. His purpose is not to assert himself as the global environmental

¹⁹ Francis, 28

²⁰ Ibid.

expert but rather to encourage the different governing bodies across the world to begin to consider these issues and how they may be solved.

One policy area that Francis pays particular attention to is energy regulation. Energy generation is an essential aspect of our society; without energy, most industrial pursuits and domestic adaptations would be crippled. Understanding this importance, Pope Francis addresses the type of energy we must generate for a sustainable future. According to Francis, “We know that technology based on the use of high polluting fossil fuels—especially coal, but also oil, and, to a lesser degree, gas—needs to be progressively replaced without delay... But the international community has still not reached adequate agreements about the responsibility for paying the costs of this energy transition.”²¹ This comment is similar to Francis’s remark about water in that they each follow a similar pattern. First, Francis describes something that must be changed. In this example, it is our reliance on fossil fuels; in the previous example, it is the scarcity of clean water available to the poor. Next, Francis suggests a way that this problem may be remedied—with regard to our fossil fuel reliance, Francis suggests we should “progressively” develop technology that can produce energy in an efficient way that utilizes our resources and does not threaten the environment.²² It is clear that the transition from the traditional oil, gas, and coal energy production model to one that more efficiently utilizes fossil fuels and heavily incorporates renewable energy will be expensive and time consuming. Pope Francis suggests that to properly make this transition, the international community should fairly divide the financial burden of this process. This process of identifying problems and recommending solutions is major theme in Francis’s address to the international community.

²¹ Francis, 114

²² Ibid.

Throughout *Laudato Si'*, Francis provides many suggestions as to how certain environmental problems may be confronted. In these instances, Francis is primarily addressing diplomats, government leaders, and representatives that have the power to create policies that would incorporate or address these suggestions. *Laudato Si'* is a religious encyclical, and its primary purpose is to inform the public of the consequences of climate change that many parts of the world are experiencing, and to teach them how we as individuals should care for the Earth in our approach to life and in our daily actions. A sizeable percentage of *Laudato Si'*, however, is devoted to addressing the international community and domestic governing bodies. Among this lobbying, Francis's main focuses are suggesting policies for foreign governments and advocating for strong international action.

Addressing the Church Community

In October of 2014, Pope Francis called for a conference, or synod, to discuss modern family issues. At the synod, with more than 200 bishops in attendance, Francis personally argued that the conference report should include language that allowed for a more "merciful" disposition towards gay and lesbian marriages.²³ Although the stronger language that Francis originally wanted to incorporate was substantially weakened because of an inability to receive the required approval of two-thirds of the attending bishops, this departure from the traditional church stance infuriated conservative Catholic leaders. Philadelphia Archbishop Charles Caput criticized Francis for creating "confusion," and added that "confusion is of the devil." American Cardinal Raymond Burke offered even stronger criticism: "Many have expressed their concerns to me... There is a strong sense that the church is like a ship without a rudder."²⁴ Burke and Francis have

²³ Willey, BBC News 2014, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-29677779>

²⁴ Quoted in Hampson, USA Today 2014, <http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2014/11/01/pope-francis-catholics-americans-culture/18263293/>

clashed on a number of occasions before and after the release of *Laudato Si'*—Burke's public criticism of Francis's policies has seen him removed from multiple influential congregations of the Roman Curia and suspended from his prestigious Patronage of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta²⁵. The Curia is the administrative arm of the Vatican government and assists the pope in governing the Catholic Church—somewhat like how the various executive and bureaucratic bodies of the United States serve the president. The presence of a forceful opposition to Francis's willingness to depart from traditional beliefs is clear. It is simultaneously clear that Pope Francis was ruffling the feathers of conservative members of the clergy before *Laudato Si'* was released.

If we had to place *Laudato Si'* on the political spectrum, it would fall further on the left than on the right. It seems that Francis understood that when his encyclical was published, it would receive criticism from right-leaning church leaders. For this reason, Pope Francis went to extensive lengths to appeal to religious sources that are generally accepted by all members of the Catholic Church. In doing so, Francis strove to give *Laudato Si'* credibility in the eyes of conservative clergy members that might be inclined to dismiss the encyclical on the grounds that it is a liberal document and does not represent the full tradition of the Church's beliefs. The table below lists the number of times that Francis cited these religious sources in *Laudato Si'*.

Table 1: Count of Selected Citations in *Laudato Si'*

The Bible	The Catechism	Previous Popes	Papal Documents	The Curia	Bishop Conferences
65	9	48	46	11	20

Pope Francis's primary goal in his extensive use of traditionally accepted sources is to appeal to those that would be skeptical of *Laudato Si'*'s arguments. The idea is this: If a good portion of

²⁵ California Catholic Daily 2016, <http://cal-catholic.com/cardinals-burke-pell-officially-removed-from-congregation-for-divine-worship/>, Chretien, LifeSite 2017, <https://www.lifesitenews.com/news/reinstated-knights-of-malta-condom-promoter-cardinal-burke-de-facto-suspend>

Francis's message comes from the Bible, the words of previous popes, and the deliberations of the various conferences of bishops across the globe, Francis is merely gathering and reporting on a fairly established idea rather than imposing an independent moral opinion on the Church. Francis frequently cited the Bible, the Catechism (the compendium of Catholic traditions and beliefs), and organizations of the Curia. Among these citations, Francis quotes the Old Testament, the Gospels, the Pontifical Academy of Sciences, and the Second Vatican Council, just to name a few.²⁶ These texts and organizations form the foundation of the beliefs and operations of the Catholic Church and as such, it logically seems that they would be accepted by most Catholics as appropriate forms of evidence—I assert that few conservative Catholics would criticize a pope for relying too extensively on the Bible.

Pope Francis also meticulously cites previous popes and previous papal documents—he cites past popes and their doctrine nearly as much as he does the Bible. Papal documents assume many different forms and they vary in their length and power to establish church doctrine. Francis mainly relies on encyclical letters, like *Laudato Si'*, apostolic letters, and apostolic exhortations. Apostolic letters are nearly identical to encyclical letters except that encyclicals are reserved for more “solemn” topics. Apostolic exhortations are used primarily to report on the conclusions of a synod.²⁷ Pope Francis would not want *Laudato Si'* to be criticized on the grounds that it is a departure from the tradition of the church. To prevent such criticism, he attempts to present *Laudato Si'* as the culmination of a growing papal consensus of the need to act to combat climate change, rather than a sudden change of position of his individual creation. To cite just one example, Francis cites Pope Benedict XVI in the opening chapter of *Laudato Si'*: “My predecessor Benedict XVI likewise proposed ‘eliminating the structural causes of the

²⁶ Francis, 49, 59, 71, & 92

²⁷ Eternal Word Television Network n.d., <https://www.ewtn.com/holysee/pontiff/categories.asp>

dysfunctions of the world economy and correcting models of growth which have proved incapable of ensuring respect for the environment.’ ...Pope Benedict asked us to recognize that the natural environment has been greatly damaged by our irresponsible behavior.”²⁸ By relying on Popes John XXIII, Paul VI, John Paul II, and Benedict XVI and their respective papal documents, Francis compiles a claim that a considerable portion of the ideas in *Laudato Si’* are not novel to his papacy but rather a continuation of ecclesiastical agreement.

Lastly, Francis makes an effort to appeal to the diversity of the church. The Catholic Church encompasses many cultures and Francis accordingly argues that his ideas concerning the environment are present throughout this diverse body. Most countries and some regional groups have what are called bishop conferences. These congregations of bishops act more or less like the regional Catholic governments under the head of the Vatican executive. Among other things, they discuss regional issues, support local parishes, and address Catholic issues within their jurisdiction.²⁹ In *Laudato Si’*, Francis cites doctrine from eighteen different bishop conferences (for a grand total of twenty mentions). Francis is carefully not to be biased in his selection of conferences to quote. He cites the Conference of Mexican Bishops, the bishops from the United States, Australia, Bolivia, The Philippines, Argentina, South Africa, Japan and ten others—representing seven continents in total. I believe Francis uses such a diverse group of citations for two reasons. First, as is the case with his citations of previous popes, Francis wants to cement the idea that he is not forcing a liberal belief on the church but rather explaining and strengthening a belief the church already holds. Second, and perhaps more important, Francis wants to give credence to the suffering that different nations experience. When citing the Latin American and

²⁸ Francis, 11-12

²⁹ USCCB, <http://www.usccb.org/about/>

Caribbean bishops, he reports that, “In fact, there are ‘proposals to internationalize the Amazon, which only serve the economic interest of transnational corporations.’”³⁰ When quoting the bishops from the Philippines, Francis discusses the damage that the regional coral reefs are experiencing: “Many of the world’s coral reefs are barren or in a state of constant decline. ‘Who has turned the wonderworld of the seas into underwater cemeteries bereft of color and life?’”³¹ This strategy simultaneously accomplishes two purposes: Francis both exposes his readers to more of the harmful effects of climate change and recognizes the diverse sufferings of the many nations that experience such effects.

Francis’s extensive citation of traditional Catholic sources reveals that he took considerable measures to give his encyclical credibility in the eyes of potentially skeptical clergy. While such attention to credibility is notable on its own, it reveals an even more interesting fact: Francis expected his encyclical to receive criticism and wrote it in a way such that it might appeal to conservative and liberal factions. This strategy insinuates that from the beginning of the drafting, Francis intended to utilize *Laudato Si’* for political purposes. If Francis wanted to promote his encyclical to foreign governments, he would certainly look foolish if a substantial faction of his church rejected it. For this reason, the Church body is nearly as important of an audience for Francis as are foreign leaders and the general public. This idea is intuitive; no policy can succeed without the support of its base—and the primary constituents of a papal encyclical are the leaders of the Catholic Church.

³⁰ Francis, 32

³¹ Ibid., 33

II. The Paris Agreement

One hundred and ninety-five countries worked together to produce the Paris Agreement—wealthy nations, poor nations, nations that produce more carbon emissions than the continent of South America put together, and nations that produce less carbon emissions than the city of Austin.³² The level of development in these countries varies greatly, and as such, the expectations and requirements for each country is different. Despite the disparity among the members of the agreement with regard to economic and technological development, three overarching goals persist throughout.

Purpose

The explicit aims of the Paris Agreement are as follows:

- (i) Limit the global average temperature to 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels, and pursue efforts to limit the global average temperature to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels
- (ii) Increase the global ability to adapt both to the adverse effects of climate change and to a new environmentally conscious economy
- (iii) Provide the appropriate finance flows to optimize the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and climate-resilient development³³

These general aims translate into many other more specific policy goals. The agreement seeks to reach these aims in the following way: providing policy guidelines, assisting the implementation of these policies with subsidiary groups, and enforcing these policies with several compliance apparatuses.

³² The Paris Agreement and United States EIA 2015, <https://www.eia.gov/beta/international/>

³³ The Paris Agreement, 22

Policy Guidelines

Despite how thorough the Paris Agreement is, most of the decisions regarding specific action are left to individual nations or regional groups. The scope of the action that each nation must take is bounded by a set of guidelines. These guidelines can be separated (unofficially) into the following groups: Emissions, Adaptation, Mitigation, Capacity-Building, Financial Flows, Technology Development, and Education and Awareness. The COP creates these guidelines with the intention that members of the agreement will adopt them in their domestic policies.

One of the most heavily-addressed topics is the reduction of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. According to the agreement: “Parties [should] aim to reach global peaking of greenhouse gas emissions as soon as possible... Each Party shall prepare, communicate, and maintain successive nationally determined contributions that it intends to achieve.”³⁴ The COP adds that the nationally determined contributions (NDCs) should “reflect [each nation’s] highest possible ambition, reflecting [their] common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities.”³⁵ More simply, each country is asked to submit a plan to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions as ambitiously as possible. In order to cap the global rise in temperatures, the COP seeks to rapidly bring the amount of global greenhouse gas emissions to a peak, and then seek to reduce that value. Nations clearly differ with respect to the amount of GHGs they emit and their capability to develop and implement clean energy technology. For this reason, the flexible NDCs are a major component of the Paris Agreement. The idea of distributing the burden of reducing emissions with regard to the level of development in each nation is not new to the world of international environmental policy—the Kyoto Protocol established a range different emissions

³⁴ The Paris Agreement, 22

³⁵ Ibid.

targets for the members of the agreement.³⁶ As I will discuss shortly, a major difference between the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement is the ability for each nation to self-determine their contributions and the various enforcement mechanisms aimed to ensure that the NDCs are both reasonably fair commitments and that these commitments are followed. The process of reducing emissions extends to safeguarding forests: “Parties should take action to conserve and enhance, as appropriate, sinks and reservoirs of greenhouse gases...including forests.”³⁷ Forests are important greenhouse gas sinks. The term sink refers to a source of deposit. Forests absorb carbon dioxide and produce oxygen, and are thus important both as an ecological structure, and also as a means of eliminating harmful gases in the atmosphere. The Paris Agreement outlines the requirements for several other policy areas—assisting developing nations adapt to adverse conditions, technology development, financial support, etc.—with language similar to the guidelines on emissions reduction. Besides establishing guidelines for NDCs, the Paris Agreement seeks to scrutinize the content of each NDC, review the progress each nation is making regarding their NDCs, provide financial, technological, and policy assistance to the parties, and fight climate change in several other ways. In order to address these specific tasks individually, the COP assigns jobs to subsidiary bodies that were either created by the Paris Agreement or established by previous environmental agreements.

Subsidiary Bodies

Not every subsidiary body listed in the Paris Agreement is new—some are carried over from the Kyoto Protocol or other past conferences.³⁸ Regardless of their origin, these committees help this complex piece of policy address specific issues more directly. For example, the

³⁶ UNFCCC 2011, https://unfccc.int/files/press/backgrounders/application/pdf/fact_sheet_the_kyoto_protocol.pdf

³⁷ The Paris Agreement, 23

³⁸ UNFCCC 2011

emissions guidelines are intended to influence the establishment of domestic policies that will take direct action to peak the amount of harmful gasses being released into the atmosphere and subsequently, the global rise in temperatures. The intention of the COP is for each of the members of the agreement to address these guidelines in the way optimal to the set of circumstances that define that party. To assist with the translation of these guidelines into policies and the implementation of these policies, the agreement established several subsidiary bodies. One such auxiliary body is the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA), which is tasked to “develop and recommend guidance to the [mechanism] referred to under Article 6 Paragraph 4.”³⁹ The agreement creates an anonymous mechanism purposed to promote the mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions and to incentivize participation in these efforts in the public and private sector. The SBSTA will act as the supervisor for this mechanism and will provide guidelines and procedures for the mechanism. This committee will also “undertake a work programme for non-market approaches to sustainable development.”⁴⁰ The SBSTA is one example of the Paris Agreement’s approach to implementing policy. Through the anonymous mechanism and the SBSTA, the COP will help countries to adapt the guidelines concerning the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. Although individual states determine their own contributions, the COP hopes that by providing these nations, especially the developing nations, with specific assistance, that the likelihood that the guidelines stipulated in the Paris Agreement will be adhered to will increase greatly.

The SBSTA’s main purpose is to provide supervision and general support for the parties as they attempt to reduce their GHG emissions. Not all of the subsidiary bodies operate in this way. Another subsidiary body is the Technology Executive Committee (TEC), which is

³⁹ The Paris Agreement, 6

⁴⁰ Ibid.

composed of technical experts from various scientific, economic, and social fields and its main purpose is to “enhance [the] efforts to facilitate and support Parties in scaling up the implementation of parties, practices and actions.”⁴¹ One specific task that the TEC undertakes is to provide, on an annual basis, “A summary for policymakers, with information on specific policies, practices and actions representing best practices and with the potential to be scalable and replicable.”⁴² The summary offers policy examples to nations that may not know how best to address their intended emissions contributions. By providing members with a policy summary, the COP is trying to make it easier for states to adapt the emissions guidelines. Throughout the Paris Agreement, the COP establishes auxiliary bodies or committees to assist with the implementation of the guidelines, with particular consideration for developing nations. The Adaption Committee provides guidelines and recommendations for projects that are designed to help nations adapt to the effects of climate change, the Standing Committee on Finance to address finance flows guidelines, and many more. Together, subsidiary bodies form a major portion of the Paris Agreement. One of the other aspects of the Paris Agreement, and arguably the most important advance in environmental policy, is the presence of several mechanisms that are designed to enforce the NDCs that each nation provides.

Enforcement

During the conference in France, the conversation concerning means of enforcement was easily one of the most controversial points of discussion. Negotiators have to walk the fine line between creating an agreement that has no teeth to enforce its stipulations and discouraging nations from signing the agreement on the grounds that it would require them to relinquish an

⁴¹ The Paris Agreement, 16

⁴² Ibid.

unacceptable amount of autonomy.⁴³ Although several different requirements and subsidiary bodies are committed to compliance, they all work toward the same strategy: expose the nations that are not contributing fairly or are not meeting their pledges and allow the pressure from other members to hold them accountable to these failures. According to Article 13 of the agreement, in addition to their NDCs, parties must provide “Information necessary to track the progress made in implementing and achieving its nationally determined contributions.”⁴⁴ The secretariat of the COP will publish this information so that it may be accessed by the public. The ostensible purpose of this requirement is to “provide a clear understanding of climate change action in light of the objective of the Convention.”⁴⁵ Because information concerning the progress of NDCs will be public, other members will be able to see if a party is being particularly negligent. The idea is that the threat of shame or negative press from the reporting requirement will compel the international community to meet their NDCs.

In addition to the publication requirement, the progress tracking information “shall undergo a technical expert review” and “shall consist of a consideration of the Party’s support provided, as relevant, and its implementation and achievement of its nationally determined contribution. The review shall also identify areas of improvement for the Party, and also include a review of the consistency of the information provided.”⁴⁶ One purpose of this technical review is to assist the parties by providing analysis on the implementation of their domestic policies and advice as to how to improve their efforts. This technical expert review also functions somewhat as an audit, and will attempt to ascertain whether the nation’s NDCs are truly representative of their specific capacity, whether the progress that that party has made constitutes genuine effort

⁴³ Stefanini, Politico 2016, <http://www.politico.eu/article/paris-climate-urgenda-courts-lawsuits-cop21/>

⁴⁴The Paris Agreement., 29

⁴⁵ Ibid., 28

⁴⁶ Ibid., 29

and commitment, and whether the progress tracking information is consistent and accurate.

Although no action can be taken against a nation in the event that the technical expert review concludes that that nation is not contributing their fair share, the subsequent pressure from the other members to the agreement, as well as from the rest of the international community, similar to the pressure mentioned in the paragraph above, encourages the nations to be committed to the guidelines of the agreement or run the risk of a negative technical expert review.

Out of a desire to be as thorough as possible in their efforts to encourage compliance of the agreement, the COP created many guidelines and subsidiary bodies to support this task. It is worth noting that Article 15 of the Paris Agreement establishes the creation of “A mechanism to facilitate implementation of and promote compliance with the provisions of the Agreement.”⁴⁷

This mechanism will provide additional support to the previously mentioned means of enforcing the guidelines of the agreement. It is important to recognize that this mechanism must operate in a way that is “non-adversarial and non-punitive.”⁴⁸ This short phrase summarizes the COP’s approach towards enforcement of the Paris Agreement. Because, for whatever reason, other, more punitive means of enforcing the agreement are unavailable, the COP has chosen to encourage adherence to the provisions of the agreement by providing as much specific information regarding the commitments and progress of the parties as possible. In doing so, their goal is to allow the potential backlash from the international community to pressure the parties into setting honest goals and meeting these goals.

⁴⁷ The Paris Agreement, 29

⁴⁸ Ibid.

III. A Comparison

One aspect that most separates these two pieces of policy is their overall purpose. An examination into the outcomes that would deem the policies a success or a failure exposes subtler differences. *Laudato Si'* is first and foremost a document for promotion—it seeks not to prescribe or enforce action but to encourage a policy that does. Whether the general public, international diplomats, or the church community are the target for a certain section or comment, the power of *Laudato Si'* rests in its ability to *influence* ideas. Pope Francis cannot pass policies that a government will subsequently enforce and he cannot call an international gathering to address climate change. The Catholic Church is one of the largest organized religious bodies in the world, and as such, when the Church passes judgement on some issue, billions of Catholics (and many who are not Catholic) hear that message as it is distributed through the Church hierarchy. Pope Francis understands this position of influence and uses this resource to promote his ideas. For *Laudato Si'* to be successful, Francis's ideas must be absorbed, or at least considered and debated in homes, capitals, and churches across the world. Accordingly, it is in Francis's best interest to make sure that his words are heard by as many people as possible and that the subtleties of *Laudato Si'* are explained to as many influential politicians as possible.

The Paris Agreement is markedly different than *Laudato Si'* because the primary purpose of the Paris Agreement is to directly facilitate action combating climate change. Because of the members' joint agreement to meet and discuss international climate issues UNFCCC can negotiate directly with the representatives of 195 nations to an extent that the Catholic Church will never attain. For this reason, the COP can create specific guidelines and policies for the parties to follow, whereas Pope Francis can only suggest ideas or encourage collaboration. The most important determinant of success for the Paris Agreement is whether the parties genuinely

adhere to the agreement. Although several different compliance-encouraging mechanisms are in play, the Paris Agreement has no power to punish nations that do not commit to ambitious goals or do not authentically work to meet these goals. If the Parties are not sufficiently committed to the agreement, it is not possible for the agreement to achieve its explicit goals.

Assuming that the parties do follow the agreement, the subsequent measures of success will only be revealed over somewhat sizeable periods of time. Although nations must present NDCs and progress reports, the impact that these emissions reductions will have on the global temperature average may not be quantifiable in the immediate future. Although nations may invest heavily in clean energy research, and may help developing nations to implement technologies domestically, the extent to which energy production efficiency will increase or the extent to which developing nations will assimilate these practices may be difficult to predict. In this way, although the purpose of the Paris Agreement is to take ambitious action against climate change, it is, in many ways, an investment.

Although the long-term effects of the Paris Agreement may be difficult to quantify, it is possible to quantify the short-term effects rather easily. The quantity of greenhouse gases emitted can be measured and compared to previous levels, mitigation and adaptation efforts can be summarized, and financial and technological investment can be totaled. These somewhat specific metrics are not possible for *Laudato Si'*. Because Pope Francis's main intention is to teach and influence, no one obvious means of directly measuring the impact of *Laudato Si'* exists. One measure of the success of *Laudato Si'* will be how many people accept his teachings on the moral and logistical changes that they must make in order to live a life more in harmony with the Earth, and implement these changes into their daily life. One pivotal measure of Francis's success is be the impact that his encyclical had on the international community, especially on

diplomats and representatives that have the power to make policy. Clearly, explicit metrics cannot describe the effects above. In order to assess the power of Francis's encyclical, we must ask the following question: How did the world react to *Laudato Si'*? Through his international travels and his pursuit to disperse his encyclical throughout the world, Francis promoted his environmental agenda. Media, heads of state, and normal people reacted to the pope's action and it is the magnitude and frequency of these effects that we must use to describe Francis's power and influence.

Overall, *Laudato Si'* has a less specific constituency than the Paris Agreement. Francis's target audience, the general public and international policy makers, is broader than that of the 195 governments whose representatives negotiated the Paris Agreement. Although the guidelines in the Paris Agreement are vague at times, the goals are explicitly listed, and the means by which these goals are to be met are specified. The goals and strategies of Francis's encyclical are not as straightforward. *Laudato Si'* is admittedly organized into specific sections that are each different means of teaching about the origin and threat of climate change and persuading both the public and their governments to take action. These sections are not necessarily intended to accomplish one purpose rather than the other; rather, all of the sections work together to accomplish the same overall goal of teaching and influencing. Both of these documents represent a recent prioritization of addressing the threat that climate change poses. In order to understand the effects *Laudato Si'* had in relation to the Paris Agreement, we must understand the scope of these effects. The most blatant evidence of such influence can be seen at the biggest (environmental) stage: the 21st Conference of Parties in Paris, France.

Chapter Three: An Inconsistent Papal Presence in the UNFCCC

The media is an immensely powerful entity. As I will discuss in detail later, *Laudato Si'* and COP 21 received a sizable amount of media coverage, especially in relation to past papal encyclicals and environmental conferences. Popes publish encyclicals fairly regularly—Benedict XVI released three during his eight year papacy. Unless these encyclicals are popularized for some reason, the only people that have a strong incentive to read them, for the most part, are members of the clergy, academically dedicated Catholics, and extremely devoted theologians. Similarly, the UNFCCC conferences receive a conditional amount of attention. The parties to the UNFCCC convene every year but few conferences aim to negotiate a document like the Paris Agreement. At these less publicly visible meetings, presidents and prime ministers send their ministers of the environment or secretaries of state as representatives. The attention that Francis, *Laudato Si'*, and COP 21 received raises several questions. Why have the media chosen to focus on Pope Francis and his encyclical? Why have they chosen to focus on this COP? If we consider these events more carefully, other, more important questions arise. Why did Francis decide to publish *Laudato Si'* in June 2015? Why did representatives to the UNFCCC decide to quote Francis at COP 21 and not before? In this chapter, I first describe the tradition of the papal position on climate change and establish that Francis is not the first pope to support action to combat environmental problems. I will then explicitly analyze the statements made at three meetings of the UNFCCC. I aim to show that although Pope Francis is mentioned only at COP 21, the ideas in the statements are more or less continuous throughout. It is my hope that by providing this analysis, I will credibly establish the presence of an unusual instance of papal influence in an otherwise unbroken pattern of relative silence.

I. Past and Present Environmental Doctrine

In their coverage of *Laudato Si'*, the New York Times describes the encyclical as a call for a “radical [emphasis added] transformation of politics, economics and individual lifestyles to confront environmental degradation and climate change.”⁴⁹ While it might require significant political, economic, and societal change to realize Francis’s vision, the ideas themselves are not radical, or at least not for the Catholic Church. Pope Paul VI (1963-1978) spoke against human exploitation of the earth in his apostolic letter *Octogesima Adveniens* and Pope John Paul II (1978-2005) warned that our lack of respect for nature threatens a “progressive decline in the quality life” when he spoke at the World Day of Peace.⁵⁰ Many theologians and historians refer to Pope Benedict XVI (2005-2013) as “The Green Pope” because of the frequency and passion with which he preached on the importance of caring for the environment and those affected by its mistreatment.⁵¹ Although he had a different public presence than Francis has, the protection of the environment was a major theme in Benedict’s papacy.

Unlike Francis, Pope Benedict did not publish an encyclical about climate change. The lack of a major document on climate change, however, does not diminish the action Benedict took to speak against the onset of climate change. Popes spread their doctrine through many alternate (and admittedly somewhat less public) avenues. In a message to the General Director of the World Food Day, Benedict stressed the importance of the balance of consumption and sustainability: “The order of creation demands that a priority be given to those human activities

⁴⁹ Yardley & Goodstein, The New York Times 2015, https://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/19/world/europe/pope-francis-in-sweeping-encyclical-calls-for-swift-action-on-climate-change.html?_r=0

⁵⁰ Quoted in Geiling, Think Progress 2015, <https://thinkprogress.org/the-popes-encyclical-isn-t-the-first-time-the-catholic-church-has-spoken-out-on-the-environment-4b3ac6d03888#.uz0diyqgm>

⁵¹ Patenaude, The Catholic World Report 2014, http://www.catholicworldreport.com/Item/3087/the_green_pope_and_a_human_ecology.aspx

that do not cause irreversible damage to nature, but which instead are woven into the social, cultural, and religious fabric of the different communities. In this way, a sober balance is achieved between consumption and the sustainability of resources.”⁵² The World Food Day “is a celebration of the establishment of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.” Hundreds of countries and millions of people annually participate in World Food Day by volunteering to prepare and deliver food to those in need, raising awareness through public demonstrations, and donating food or money.⁵³ With this cause in mind, Benedict emphasized the need for a level of consumption that does not cause the less fortunate to suffer. When we consume more than we need, an occurrence of which developed nations are particularly guilty, someone suffers at our expense. We often do not witness this suffering because those that suffer are removed from us, either by class or geography. Benedict’s message is similar to Francis’s call for a societal shift away from overconsumption. In *Laudato Si’* Francis writes about the widespread “throwaway culture”—if we want to help the marginalized developing nations, we must become a culture that does not take more than what they need simply because it is more convenient to do so. All sacrificial acts of preservation, big or small, must be appreciated and treated as praiseworthy, rather than scoffed at for their relatively small contribution to global sustainability.⁵⁴

While speaking at a papal audience in 2012, Pope Benedict related climate change to human nature: “The deterioration of nature is... closely connected to the culture that shapes human coexistence: when ‘human ecology’ is respected within society, environmental ecology also benefits. The Earth is indeed a precious gift of the Creator who, in designing its intrinsic

⁵² Quoted in ICSD 2017, <http://www.interfaithsustain.com/pope-benedict-xvi-on-the-environment/>

⁵³ FAO 2015, <http://www.worldfooddayusa.org/what-is-wfd>

⁵⁴ Francis, 19

order, has given us bearings that guide us as stewards of his creation. Precisely from within this framework, the Church considers matters concerning the environment and its protection intimately linked to the theme of integral human development.”⁵⁵ Each Wednesday, if the pope is in Rome, he will hold a papal audience in St. Peter’s square. At this audience, the pope welcomes special guests, like refugees or diplomats, is driven around the square to greet the crowd, and among other things, delivers a sermon. This sermon is an opportunity for the pope to preach to a large number of people. From 2013 to 2015, the mean papal audience attendance was 31,438 people—a sizable number of listeners.⁵⁶ In short, these Wednesday audiences are a way for the pope to disperse his message to many listeners. Benedict’s “integral human development” resonates strongly with Francis’s “integral ecology.” Both popes believe that the values that we prioritize in our cultures and society are intimately related to the care of the environment. If we want to help the environment heal and protect it from further damage, we have to make two changes: we must change our physical practices in industry and we must also change our moral priorities. These changes require a shift away from the culture of consumerism, isolationism, and prioritization of industrial efficiency and towards a social and economic culture that balances the need to care for the environment and its inhabitants.

Although Francis has acted quite publicly in his advocacy for the protection of the environment, he is certainly not the first pope to spread the idea that mankind has a responsibility to care for our planet and that that responsibility includes trimming our excessive consumption and being responsible with our production. As I will discuss in the following section, after *Laudato Si’*, Pope Francis was heralded as an environmental talisman following the release and

⁵⁵ Quoted in ICSD 2017, <http://www.interfaithsustain.com/pope-benedict-xvi-on-the-environment/>

⁵⁶ Nucci, The Catholic World Report 2016, http://www.catholicworldreport.com/Blog/4475/large_decrease_in_visitors_to_papal_events_in_2015_jubilee_numbers_low_so_far.aspx

promotion of his encyclical. In light of the action of previous popes, this phenomenon raises the following question: Why have they chosen Francis to praise above all the other popes, and why now?

II. Three Pivotal Conferences

Although many of Pope Benedict's ideas concerning climate change sound similar to Francis's, he fails to be mentioned at the UNFCCC's meetings. Despite Pope Benedict's passionate preaching on the importance of environmental stewardship, no explicit evidence of his influence appeared at the 2012 COP 18.⁵⁷ At COP 20, after Francis had become pope but before he published *Laudato Si'*, Francis's influence is entirely absent.⁵⁸ In fact, there is no documented evidence of a pope ever being mentioned in a statement made by a head of state at a meeting of the UNFCCC. COP 21 was a major deviation from the perennial lack of papal influence. One of the ways we can track this influence is by investigating the statements that the nations' representatives made at these three conferences. The language that these representatives use and, more importantly, the figures they reference, provide a large amount of insight into their major influences.

For this analysis, I have chosen to discuss at length the opening statements for Paraguay and Ecuador. The presidents of both of these nations mentioned Pope Francis during their statements at COP 21 but did not mention Benedict or Francis at COP 18 or 20. As I will show by analyzing these statements, the ideas that are communicated are largely similar throughout. I

⁵⁷ COP 18 High-Level Statements, http://unfccc.int/meetings/doha_nov_2012/statements/items/7324.php

⁵⁸ COP 20 High-Level Statements, http://unfccc.int/meetings/lima_dec_2014/statements/items/8733.php

aim to provoke to following question: If the Paraguayan and Ecuadorian representatives are more or less expressing the same ideas throughout, why did they choose to mention Francis in 2015?

Paris, France: COP 21

At COP 21, Paraguay and Ecuador both cited Pope Francis explicitly. In his opening statement, Ecuadorian President Rafael Correa mentions the pope by name and criticizes the exploitation of developing nations: “El Papa Francisco en su reciente encíclica *Laudato Si*, nos recuerda que en los países en vías de desarrollo están las más importantes reservas de la biósfera y que con ellas se sigue alimentando el desarrollo de los países más ricos, sacrificando su presente y su futuro.”⁵⁹ In front of the body of heads of state, President Correa cited Pope Francis’s ideas and endorsed his recommendations—a significant show of support for the Argentine pontiff. Francis did not come up with these ideas himself, but rather compiled and advocated for them in his encyclical. In this way, nothing that Correa, or by extension, Francis, is saying is overly new. What is more significant is that Correa appears to invoke *Laudato Si*’ and Pope Francis as a sort of moral authority. Francis’s ideas are not necessarily the reason Correa is citing *Laudato Si*’—the president appears to care because it is Francis who promoted the ideas.

President Horacio Cartes of Paraguay cites *Laudato Si*’ similarly to President Correa. Near the beginning of his speech, Cartes cites Francis to describe the mistreatment of the Earth: “En su Encíclica, ‘*Laudato Si*’”, Su Santidad Papa Francisco, hace un dramática advertencia para enfrentar las crisis y proteger las fuentes de vida, sosteniendo que: ‘Nunca hemos maltratado y lastimado nuestra casa común, como en los últimos de siglos.’”⁶⁰ Just as President Correa did,

⁵⁹ Correa, COP 21, Paris 2015. English translation by author: Pope Francis, in his recent encyclical, *Laudato Si*’, reminds us that some of the most important reserves of the biosphere are in developing nations and the richest nations use them to feed their development while sacrificing the present and future of the developing nations.

⁶⁰ Cartes, COP 21, Paris 2015. English translation by author: In his encyclical *Laudato Si*’, his holiness Pope Francis has made a dramatic warning to face this crisis and protect the sources of our life, supported by the fact that: “We have never hurt and mistreated our common home like we have in the last centuries.”

President Cartes appears to cite Francis primarily because of the credibility of his position and not necessarily because of the content of *Laudato Si'*. He could have referred to any number of scientific journals or news articles for the same information. Additionally, the themes in his speech are more or less identical to the themes in Paraguay's statements at past conferences. It seems that Cartes chose to quote Francis not for his scientific credibility but because he is the head of one of the largest moral authorities on the planet. Cartes and Correa's citation of the pope make the case that because of the standing of his position, Pope Francis assumes a sort of moral credibility. Cartes and Correa point to this pope and assert that if the head of the Catholic Church is proclaiming the need for economic and social environmental reform, we should listen. At COP 21, particularly in nations with high Catholic populations, *Laudato Si'* is cited both for its content and its moral credibility.

COP 21 is arguably the most important environmental meeting since the conference that produced the Kyoto Protocol. When the Kyoto Protocol entered into force in 2005, more than 55 nations ratified the agreement and these nations accounted for more than 55% of global carbon emissions. In 2012, when the first commitment period to the Kyoto Protocol expired, Canada, Russia, and Japan declined to submit new targets for the second commitment period.⁶¹ As I will show in detail later, the summit at Paris had been identified for several years as the meeting where the international community would attempt to create a new, more powerful and unifying, climate agreement. The United States, a country that never ratified the Kyoto Protocol, communicated its intent to attend the summit and ratify the resulting treaty. Speaking in China, President Obama pledged to double the rate at which the United States reduced pollution and to

⁶¹ UNFCCC 2014, http://unfccc.int/kyoto_protocol/status_of_ratification/items/2613.php

donate 3 billion U.S. dollars to the Green Climate Fund (GCF).⁶² I assert that the 21st meeting of the Conference of Parties in Paris was a highly-anticipated and visible event. Because of the heightened attention, it would be logical for an environmental encyclical like *Laudato Si'* to receive more coverage than in a normal year. This logic can be explained in the following way: Pope Francis publishes an environmental encyclical; There is more attention than usual to environmental policy at this time; Therefore, Francis's encyclical receives a boost in press. However, I assert that these two events have a different relationship—I believe that Pope Francis published *Laudato Si'* when he did *because* of the visibility and importance of the upcoming conference. If we investigate the opening statements of Paraguay and Ecuador at COP 18, the meeting that ratified the Doha Amendment, and at COP 20, the precursor to the Paris Agreement, we will see that there is no explicit evidence of Vatican environmental teaching. The contrast between the weak global influence following standard preaching and the strong global influence following the publishing of *Laudato Si'*, coupled with the knowledge of the highly-anticipated conference at Paris makes Francis's timing and content with his encyclical seem plausibly intentional.

Doha, Qatar: COP 18

Although COP 18 did not produce a major agreement, like the conferences in Paris or Kyoto, it was still important. The purpose of the conference in Qatar, the first to be held in the Middle East, was to establish the second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol.⁶³ When the Kyoto Protocol was created in 1997 and entered into force in 2005, the protocol established that

⁶² Weihua, China Daily USA 2014, http://usa.chinadaily.com.cn/us/2014-11/17/content_18926809.htm

The GCF is an international pool of resources that is utilized to help developing nations adapt to the adverse effects of climate change and establish clean energy infrastructure

⁶³ Al Jazeera 2012, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2012/11/2012112653846518562.html>

the deadline to complete the determined objectives was the end of 2012.⁶⁴ This requirement stipulated that nations had until 2012 to reduce the rate at which they released carbon emissions to the levels specified by the agreement. There were other areas of focus, particularly the protection of land and forests in developing nations, but the emission goals were the priority of the protocol (58 of the 96 pages in the Kyoto Protocol Reference Manual relate to emissions standards).⁶⁵ Before COP 18, the UN was already expecting to establish a new, stronger agreement to replace the Kyoto Protocol.⁶⁶ Many diplomats believed that this future agreement, to be negotiated by no later than the end of 2015, would not enter into force until 2020.⁶⁷ In fact, the Paris Agreement entered into force on November 4, 2016.⁶⁸ Earlier than expected ratification notwithstanding, this agreement will be subject to many logistical steps before it can achieve its full impact. For example, the Paris Agreement established an Adaptation Committee. This committee is responsible for the creation of a process by which adaptation needs, primarily in developing nations, are identified and assessed.⁶⁹ This particular function will not begin to operate properly until this process is agreed upon—an endeavor that will take time. In summary, in 2012, the UNFCCC expected there to be a gap of time in between the new climate agreement and the end of the first commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol where, unless a new proposition was agreed upon, no new environmental action would be taken. For this reason, the

⁶⁴ UN Climate Change Secretariat 2014, https://unfccc.int/files/kyoto_protocol/doha_amendment/application/pdf/frequently_asked_questions_doha_amendment_to_the_kp.pdf

⁶⁵ UNFCCC Kyoto Protocol Reference Manual

⁶⁶ UN Climate Change Secretariat 2014

⁶⁷ Northrup, World Resources Institute 2015, Northrop, Eliza. n.d. "FAQs About How the Paris Agreement Enters into Force." WRI.com. <http://www.wri.org/faqs-about-how-paris-agreement-enters-force>.

⁶⁸ UNFCCC 2017, http://unfccc.int/paris_agreement/items/9444.php

⁶⁹ Northrup & Krnjaic, World Resources Institute 2015, <http://www.wri.org/blog/2016/03/after-cop21-7-key-tasks-implement-paris-agreement>

Doha Amendment was important. The goal of this second enrollment period was to encourage ambitious environmental action during the transition of agreements.

Although the environmental community, diplomats, and their heads of state understood that the Doha Amendment would not have the same level of impact as the expected 2015 agreement, they still stressed the importance of its success. They did not have as palpable of a document as *Laudato Si'* to brandish as moral ammunition for environmental action, but they were not entirely without Catholic support. Pope Benedict XVI, the green pope, frequently and publicly stressed the importance of preserving the environment and caring for those that are hurt by the effects of climate change. Paraguay's Minister of the Environment Heriberto Osnaghi did not refer to the Catholic Church or Pope Benedict once during his address to the COP. The ideas in his speech do not differ greatly from the ideas that President Cartes would later discuss in his address in Paris. Speaking ten days into the conference, Osnaghi reminds the COP of the importance of helping developing nations adapt to the adverse effects of climate change:

“Paraguay, como país en vías de desarrollo, sufre como todos, las consecuencias y debe destinar recursos para adaptarse.”⁷⁰ As it did in 2015, Paraguay highlighted the need to assist developing nations adapt to the effects of climate change—effects that are often caused by wealthy nations. The difference is that this time, for whatever reason, they did not include a quote from the pope.

A comparison of the 2015 and 2012 Ecuadorian statements tells a similar story. In Ecuadorian Secretary of State Ivonne Juez de Paki's statement, she mentioned neither the church nor Pope Benedict. As is the case with the two Paraguayan speeches, many of the same ideas are present. Secretary Juez de Paki, like her president would in the future, stressed the urgency and modernity of the onset of climate change: “La OPEP sentaría un precedente único, al dar

⁷⁰ Osnaghi, COP 18, Doha 2012. English translation by author: Paraguay, as a developing nation, suffers the consequences, like all such nations, and must set aside resources to adapt.

respuestas efectivas a los desafíos más importantes y urgentes del siglo XXI: la pobreza, el cambio climático y el desarrollo sostenible.”⁷¹ The Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries, OPEC, is a multi-national group that seeks to exercise their combined oil and gas assets to accomplish economic benefits. This organization’s share of present and potential oil and gas operations is massive—they account for 20% of the world’s natural gas production, 42% of the world’s crude oil production, and have a whopping 80% of the total global crude oil reserves.⁷² Speaking as a representative of an OPEC nation, Juez de Paki reminds the COP that this economically influential block of nations can have great impact on efforts to combat climate change. The more important takeaway is that although Secretary Juez de Paki voiced the same ideas that President Correa would in 2015, she decided not to cite Pope Benedict, which suggests that she, like Minister Osnaghi, did not believe that the green pope’s influence warranted inclusion in her speech. Explicit papal influence was missing from Ecuador and Paraguay’s statements in 2012 and after Pope Francis’s election in 2013, neither country thought to include the new pope’s words at COP 20. An analysis of these statements reveals that COP 18 and 20 were not different because they did not exhibit papal influence—COP 21 was different because it did.

Lima, Peru: COP 20

Despite its reputation for being the meeting before the meeting that produced the Paris Agreement, COP 20 was not entirely a filler conference.⁷³ The feeling before the conference was that negotiations would be intense; every detail that was agreed upon in Peru was a detail that did

⁷¹ Juez de Paki, COP 18, Doha 2012. English translation by author: OPEP [or OPEC in English] would like to set a unique precedent: to give effective answers to the most important and urgent challenges of the 21st century: poverty, climate change, and unsustainable development.

⁷² Statistica 2017, <https://www.statista.com/topics/1830/opec/>

⁷³ Morgan, Waskow, et al. World Resources Institute 2014. <http://www.wri.org/blog/2014/12/cop20-lays-groundwork-paris-climate-pact-7-key-developments>

not have to be belabored in Paris.⁷⁴ Shortly before the beginning of the conference, Secretary-General of the UN Ban Ki-moon impressed upon the Peruvian congress the importance of this conference: “I cannot overstate the importance of the foundation that is being laid at the UN Climate Conference in Lima.”⁷⁵ A close reading of global events reveals another interesting dynamic of COP 20: it was the second conference of parties to be held under Pope Francis’s papacy. *Laudato Si’* was not the first place Francis preached on the importance of caring for the environment. On the World Environment Day in 2013, Francis lamented the human and environmental cost of unsustainable industrial activity and stressed that we must be willing to limit our pursuit of profit.⁷⁶ Similarly, on Christmas in 2013, in front of an audience of 70,000, Francis urged the listeners to help protect the environment from the “greed and rapacity” of an uncontrolled social and economic culture.⁷⁷ Despite Francis’s recurrent support of environmental stewardship, he was nowhere to be seen in Paraguay and Ecuador’s statements at COP 20.

In Minister Osnaghi’s address to the COP, the subject matter is, for the most part, similar to the statements that Paraguay made in 2012 and would make in 2015. Admittedly, Osnaghi does discuss at some length a South American deforestation agreement that he helped negotiate in 2014—this topic is not present in Paraguay’s statements in COP 18 and COP 21. This minor difference aside, the same major themes are present throughout Paraguay’s statements at the UNFCCC meetings: The importance of sustainable development and the need to give aid to developing nations to help them adapt to the adverse effects of climate change.⁷⁸ Similarly, Venezuelan Minister of Exterior Popular Power Rafael Ramírez, speaking on behalf of a

⁷⁴ China Daily USA 2014, http://usa.chinadaily.com.cn/world/2014-12/02/content_19006693.htm

⁷⁵ Quoted in UN News Center 2014, www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=49597

⁷⁶ Huffington Post 2013, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/06/05/pope-francis-world-environment-day_n_3390299.html

⁷⁷ Quoted in Scharper, The Toronto Star 2013, <http://www.pugwashgroup.ca/index.php/member-communication-gip/448-2014-promise-environmentalists-reasons-for-hope>

⁷⁸ Osnaghi, COP 20, Lima 2014

coalition of Latin American countries that included Ecuador, makes no mention of the Argentine pontiff. Following a well-established canon of environmental language, Ramírez discusses the importance of mitigating the harm that climate change has done, helping the affected nations adapt, and limiting development to sustainable levels.⁷⁹ In these statements, as is the case with the statements from 2012, neither the Catholic Church nor the pope is referred to once. This series of statements begs the following question: If these two nations discussed more or less the same ideas in 2012, 2014, and 2015, if the current pope preached about the importance of caring for the environment in each of these years, and if each conference was sufficiently important to warrant a reasonable desire to provide a forceful statement, what changed in 2015? Why did these nations cite the pope as an environmental authority in 2015 and not before?

III. Conference Conclusions

I believe that this discrepancy is a result of a series of mindfully intentional actions on the part of Pope Francis. In 2012 and 2014, despite the fact that Benedict XVI and Francis (with respect to those years) were preaching on the importance of action to combat climate change, neither pope was mentioned at the COP's meetings. It appears that in 2015, Ecuador and Paraguay felt that Pope Francis held sufficient moral standing on the topic of climate change to warrant citing him in their statements in Paris. In 2015, from the day the Vatican published *Laudato Si'* up until the days before COP 21 began, Francis and his administration tirelessly and intentionally promoted *Laudato Si'*. Through the distribution and promotion of *Laudato Si'* and Pope Francis's frequent and public meetings with foreign governments, both the pope and his

⁷⁹ Ramírez, COP 20, Lima 2014

encyclical became a moral force that diplomats and heads of state used to foster excitement and support for the upcoming conference. In this way, the appearance of direct references to the pope in Paraguay and Ecuador's statements is a manifestation of the influential power that Pope Francis and the Catholic Church wielded in the second half of 2015.

Chapter Four: Promotion, Praise, & Politics

When Bloomsbury published J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, 12 million copies were released in the initial American print run.⁸⁰ Although greatly respected within the Catholic community, papal encyclicals are not quite this popular. When Pope Benedict XVI wrote his 2009 encyclical *Caritas in Veritate*, the *New York Times* published a middling-length review on the sixth page of their newspaper.⁸¹ Dense with complex socio-theological ideas, Catholic writer Dr. Jeff Mirus concedes that *Caritas in Veritate* “may not be the kind of encyclical that everyone needs to read.”⁸² Admittedly, Pope Benedict XVI was a noticeably less popular pope than Francis is. This popularity is summarized in the following table.

Table 2: American Favorability of Pope Benedict XVI vs. Pope Francis⁸³

Pope	“Favorable” Average	“Favorable” Low Point	“Very Favorable” Average	“Very Favorable” Low Point
Pope Benedict XVI	70-75%	67%	30-35%	17%
Pope Francis	82-87%	79%	47-52%	37%

Popularity and writing differences notwithstanding, the scope of interest of papal encyclicals is usually limited to members of the Catholic Church and other religious who are dedicated enough to read tens of thousands of words about religious and moral teaching. Francis's *Laudato Si'* was noticeably different both in its audience and its influence. Through a calculated and thorough promotion process, Pope Francis spread the ideas and moral strength of his encyclical throughout

⁸⁰ BBC Entertainment 2007, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/entertainment/6452987.stm>

⁸¹ Catholic Culture 2009, <https://www.catholicculture.org/news/headlines/index.cfm?storyid=3469>

⁸² Mirus, Catholic Culture 2009, <http://www.catholicculture.org/commentary/articles.cfm?id=331>

⁸³ Gecewicz, Pew Research Center 2017, <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/01/18/favorable-u-s-views-pope-francis/>

the globe and used it as a platform to influence the nations and heads of state that make global environmental policy. In this chapter, I will first describe some of the initial reaction to *Laudato Si'* as well as the details of the release ceremony put on by the Vatican. I will argue that even before *Laudato Si'* was released, the encyclical was intended to have international influence on environmental policy. I will then report on the three international trips that Pope Francis took in between the release of *Laudato Si'* and the beginning of COP 21 as well as the action that Francis directed his administration to take. I aim to provide a convincing account that Francis was dedicated to promoting the ideas of his encyclical both to the citizens of the places he visited and to their respective government leaders. Through this evidence, I will assert my belief that through Francis's speeches and charisma, he became a globally prevalent moral talisman for the fight against climate change.

I. Release & Reaction

Publication

Francis's political plans for *Laudato Si'* began on the first day it was published. On June 18, 2015, Cardinal Peter Turkson, President of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace and head of the *Laudato Si'* drafting team, presented the encyclical for the first time. Professor Hans Schellnhuber, the founding director of the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research (and, incidentally, an atheist), Dr. Carolyn Woo, President and CEO of Catholic Relief Services, and Metropolitan John of Pergamum, a theologian and representative of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople and the Orthodox Church, co-presented with Turkson.⁸⁴ I assert that the

⁸⁴ O'Connell, *The Jesuit Review* 2015

diversity of the presenters is in part an attempt to convey that *Laudato Si'* was not written inside of a Catholic echo chamber. Rather, the encyclical came together with the help of Catholic and non-Catholic theologians, atheist members of the scientific community, and volunteers that work first-hand with those affected by climate change. The presentation drew an unusual amount of international attention—ambassadors from many countries were among the hundreds who journeyed to Vatican City's Synod Hall for the release. Father Federico Lombardi S.J., Director of the Holy See's Press Office, expressed his belief that the feel about this encyclical was different than any other: "Never in [my] 25 years of service to the media in the Vatican [have I] seen so much global interest in any papal document."⁸⁵ The selection of diverse presenters and invitation of foreign diplomats to the release ceremony indicate that Pope Francis intended this encyclical to influence more than just the Catholic community. In reaction to the release, a considerable number of powerful politicians released statements praising *Laudato Si'*. These statements mark the beginning of *Laudato Si'* and Pope Francis's development as a significant influence in the global community.

Initial Response

During his two presidential campaigns, Barack Obama's platform included commitments to take steps to protect the environment and fight climate change.⁸⁶ When he took office, he developed regulations, proposed legislation (which failed to be passed by Congress), and negotiated treaties consistent with that platform.⁸⁷ Given Obama's stance on environmental action, it is not at all surprising that he would endorse a piece of literature that

⁸⁵ Quoted in O'Connell, *The Jesuit Review* 2015

⁸⁶ Broder, *The New York Times* 2015, <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/11/19/us/politics/19climate.html>, Michel and Popovitch, *The Guardian* 2012, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/oct/02/obama-romney-campaign-promises>

⁸⁷ Wheaton, *Politico* 2015, <http://www.politico.com/story/2015/12/climate-change-obama-paris-216716>

expressed these concerns at length. Accordingly, the day after the release ceremony, President Obama released the following statement: “I welcome His Holiness Pope Francis’s encyclical, and deeply admire the Pope’s decision to make the case – clearly, powerfully, and with the full moral authority of his position – for action on global climate change. As we prepare for global climate negotiations in Paris this December, it is my hope that all world leaders and all God’s children will reflect on Pope Francis’s call to come together to care for our common home.”⁸⁸ We should remember that, because of President Obama’s political beliefs, it is certainly complementary to his agenda for him to tout Francis’s moral authority and the ideas in his encyclical. President Obama was not swayed to support environmental policy because of *Laudato Si’*. Rather, the significance of Obama’s statement is that it voices what would become a major theme for the next six months: the establishment and endorsement by the global community of the morally-credibly Pope Francis as the mouthpiece for action to combat climate change. High ranking members of the UN echoed President Obama’s praise and reminder of the upcoming conference. A spokesman for Ban Ki-moon released the following statement: “The Secretary-General reaffirms that humanity has a significant obligation to care for and protect our common home, the planet Earth, and to show solidarity with the poorest and most vulnerable members of society who are suffering most from climate impacts. The Secretary-General therefore urges governments to place the global common good above national interests and to adopt an ambitious, universal climate agreement in Paris this year.”⁸⁹ The UN’s top climate change official, UNFCCC Executive Secretary Christina Figueres said: “Pope Francis’ [s] encyclical underscores the moral imperative for urgent action on climate change to lift the

⁸⁸ Quoted in Wiser, The Catholic Herald 2015, <http://www.catholicherald.co.uk/news/2015/06/19/obama-calls-for-world-leaders-to-heed-pope-franciss-message/>

⁸⁹ Quoted in UNFCCC, UN Climate Change News Center 2015, <http://newsroom.unfccc.int/unfccc-newsroom/pope-francis-releases-encyclical-on-climate-and-environment/>

planet's most vulnerable populations, protect development, and spur responsible growth. This clarion call should guide the world towards a strong and durable universal climate agreement in Paris at the end of this year. Coupled with the economic imperative, the moral imperative leaves no doubt that we must act on climate change now."⁹⁰ The publishing and release ceremony alone led several powerful nations and organizations to use *Laudato Si'* as a rallying call for the upcoming COP 21. Pope Francis, the head of the largest religious organization on the planet categorically endorsed the need to fight climate change and protect those who have been hurt by its effects. If world leaders promote environmental policy in Francis's name, they are difficult to criticize because to criticize the morality of their cause would be equivalent to criticizing the morality of the pope. The support and endorsement of Pope Francis began to grow rapidly because shortly after the release of *Laudato Si'*, Francis and his administration began tirelessly promoting his encyclical worldwide.

II. Promotion by the Administration

As I have previously stated, the pope and the Roman Curia are somewhat similar to the executive branch of the United States. In the United States, many federal organizations serve at the pleasure of the president, who may appoint leaders to these agencies in an attempt to more accurately carry out his or her policy goals. The State Department, the Department of Energy, and the Central Intelligence Agency, just to name a few, are all at the disposal of the elected president and have been used in a plethora of capacities under different executives. In the Vatican government, some of the elected pope's tools are the Pontifical Council for Justice and

⁹⁰ Quoted in UNFCCC, UN Climate Change News Center 2015

Peace, the Secretariat for the Economy, and the Mission of the Holy See to the United Nations, just to name a few. Each pope utilizes the Curia in different ways. After the release of *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis dispatched several arms of the Curia to promote his encyclical to the political world. Through Francis's direction, the Holy See became seriously involved in the lobbying of international diplomats to support action in Paris and in the augmentation of Pope Francis's reputation as a moral authority on climate change.

The Lead Drafter

Cardinal Peter Turkson was once a favorite to become pope when Pope Benedict XVI made history by becoming the first pope to retire since the 15th century.⁹¹ As president of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, Turkson continues to hold a sizable amount of power in the Catholic Church. He assumed an even more influential role when Francis chose him to be the principle drafter of *Laudato Si'*. In addition to his work to produce the encyclical, Cardinal Turkson became one of *Laudato Si'*'s primary spokespersons (second only to Francis himself).⁹² Shortly after its release, Turkson left his office in Rome to promote *Laudato Si'*. On June 30, just 12 days after the publishing ceremony, Turkson appeared before the UN Assembly in New York City during their special conference on the environment. Reinforcing Francis's call for action, Turkson urged the members of the assembly to have faith in the power of cooperative action: "[It] is not too late to 'change course and change hearts.' But a process of global dialogue must begin, one that can overcome entrenched ideologies and one that remains driven toward concrete solutions and firm international commitments."⁹³ In this way, Turkson actively

⁹¹ O'Donnell & O'Brien, Bloomberg News 2013, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2013-02-11/ghana-s-turkson-favorite-to-be-next-pope-after-benedict-resigns>

⁹² Lefevere, The National Catholic Reporter 2016

⁹³ Quoted in Clarke, The Jesuit Review 2015, <http://www.americamagazine.org/content/all-things/cardinal-turkson-presents-green-encyclical-un-conference>

endorsed the importance of the approaching conference in Paris. Because of the combination of his position as a representative of Pope Francis and the ideas in the text he promoted, Cardinal Turkson gave the negotiations at COP 21 both a physical and moral significance. In short, Turkson spread the idea that the obligation to preserve our planet and the creatures that live on it is not just a ecological or economic concern—it is a moral one as well. Although he did quote from *Laudato Si'* regularly, Turkson did not just repeat what Francis had already said. In the same way that a senator or president seeks to address ideas that oppose a piece of proposed legislation, Turkson sought to allay the concerns of *Laudato Si'*'s critics. Industrial leaders frequently expressed skepticism that *Laudato Si'* was anti-business and anti-technology.⁹⁴ This concern is understandable: if we place more restrictions on production and consumption, it logically follows that these industries will experience a decline in profits. Turkson addressed this idea and made the case that business and technology development are absolutely “noble” endeavors and that is when these pursuits transgress sustainable and responsible limits that they become reprehensible.⁹⁵ Following this line of logic, the production and consumption of fossil fuels is not irresponsible by itself—we only harm the environment when we engage in careless production and are totally reliant on nonrenewable resources. Whether or not Francis’s critics find this response suitable, the role Turkson played during the period of time after the release of *Laudato Si'* and before COP 21 is notable. As Francis increasingly sought to encourage support for the upcoming conference, the roles of Turkson and his staff evolved from priests and theologians to international politicians.

⁹⁴ Quoted in Clarke, *The Jesuit Review* 2015

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

International Circulation

Monsignor Joseph Grech was never favored to be pope. He did not work on the drafting of *Laudato Si'* and he is not the head of an influential congregation in the Curia but rather the First Secretary of the Mission of the Holy See to the United Nations. Directly after the release of *Laudato Si'*, Grech and his office began meeting with UN delegates and staff and distributing copies of the encyclical—less than a year after its release, more than 1,000 copies of *Laudato Si'* had been sent directly to diplomats and politicians who have the power to directly influence environmental policy.⁹⁶ The distribution of *Laudato Si'* by Grech and his staff is another example of the expansion of political activity in the Vatican. Undeniably less politically active (with regard to environmental issues) before the release of his encyclical, Francis's administration, on his order, started to feverishly promote the importance of caring for the environment in the months before global leaders would meet to negotiate the most comprehensive environmental agreement in twenty years. Francis's ability to mobilize the different arms of the Curia is a testament to his increasing participation in global politics and of his skill in doing so. This participation was in no way limited to missions and pontifical councils. During the months before COP 21, Pope Francis personally travelled to Bolivia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Cuba, the United States, Kenya, Uganda, and the Central African Republic. During these trips, he often cited *Laudato Si'* and encouraged his listeners to subscribe to the ideas in his encyclical. Additionally, he met with many heads of state and policy makers, spread the ideas of *Laudato Si'*, and promoted himself (not necessarily intentionally) as a moral authority for environmental action and a champion of the poor.

⁹⁶ Lefevere, The National Catholic Reporter 2016

III. Promotion by the Pope

Before he took his place as the successor in a line of popes that traces back to St. Peter, Francis was Jorge Bergoglio from Buenos Aires. He, the first pope from Latin America, made his way back to his home continent in July of 2015.⁹⁷ During his several international trips, Francis visited some of the most powerful establishments and poorest villages in the world. While spreading the word of his God, Francis promoted his encyclical through meetings, speeches and homilies. Throughout these trips, tens of millions of people attended events to listen to Francis's words and receive his blessings—or just to see the increasingly popular pontiff with their own eyes. He spread the ideas in *Laudato Si'*, further established his reputation as a moral authority, and influenced many political leaders.

Stop One: Latin America

South America was an ideal first stop for Pope Francis. Francis, an Argentine, is well-known for his dislike of the ornate and ostentatious—one only needs to notice the way Francis intentionally dresses in simple white robes, a sharp contrast to his predecessor, to draw this conclusion.⁹⁸ Far away from the mighty basilicas of St. Peter's and St. Mary Major, Francis's simple taste happily agrees with the unadorned Latin American villages. Furthermore, Spanish is Francis's first language. During papal audiences, several priests translate the pope's sermon from Italian into English, French, Spanish, Portuguese, German, Polish, and sometimes other languages like Russian or Arabic so that all the members of the audience can understand. When

⁹⁷ BBC News 2013, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-21777141>

⁹⁸ McGough, The LA Times 2014, <http://www.latimes.com/opinion/opinion-la/la-ol-pope-vestments-vatican-20140701-story.html>

it is time for the Spanish sermon to be given, Francis delivers it himself. In short, Francis is right at home in South America.

Francis began his trip in Ecuador—President Rafael Correa greeted the pope with an enthusiastic hug when arrived at the airport.⁹⁹ An estimated one million Ecuadorians gathered in Guayaquil to see the pope and a further 500,000 congregated when he went to the nation's capital, Quito.¹⁰⁰ Before arriving in Ecuador, Francis posted a video where “he said he wanted to bring a message of hope and joy to all ‘especially the neediest, the elderly, the sick, those in prison and the poor and all those who are victims of this ‘throwaway culture.’”¹⁰¹ Speaking to a crowd of hundreds of thousands in Quito, Francis spoke of the importance of preserving Ecuadorian Amazon region:

Among us today are some of our brothers and sisters representing the indigenous peoples of the Equatorial Amazon. That region is one of the “richest areas both in the number of species and in endemic, rare or less protected species... it requires greater protection because of its immense importance for the global ecosystem... it possesses an enormously complex biodiversity which is almost impossible to appreciate fully, yet when [such woodlands] are burned down or leveled for purposes of cultivation, within the space of a few years countless species are lost and the areas frequently become arid wastelands.”¹⁰²

By citing *Laudato Si'* in his speech, Francis was actively promoting his environmental ideas. Apparently, Francis's words took root in President Correa. When Correa cited Francis at COP 21, he spoke about the presence of important environmental reserves in developing nations and the threat that developers pose to such nations when they operate without regard for the host nation.

⁹⁹ Al Jazeera 2015, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2015/07/pope-francis-rally-catholics-visit-ecuador-150705182812211.html>

¹⁰⁰ BBC News 2015, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-33380260>

¹⁰¹ Quoted in Al Jazeera 2015

¹⁰² Quoted in Vatican Radio 2015, http://en.radiovaticana.va/news/2015/07/08/pope_francis_address_to_civil_leaders_in_quito,_ecuador/1156764

These subjects are nearly identical to those that Francis addressed in his speech and this similarity is a testament to Francis's influence in Ecuador.

Pope Francis then travelled to Bolivia where he met with President Evo Morales and attended a notoriously violent jail to speak with the prisoners.¹⁰³ In Santa Cruz, Francis reminded a massive crowd that the individual members of society have immense power and a responsibility to better the planet:

In your letters and in our meetings, you have mentioned the many forms of exclusion and injustice which you experience in the workplace, in neighborhoods and throughout the land. They are many and diverse, just as many and diverse are the ways in which you confront them. Yet there is an invisible thread joining every one of those forms of exclusion: can we recognize it? These are not isolated issues. I wonder whether we can see that these destructive realities are part of a system which has become global. Do we realize that that system has imposed the mentality of profit at any price, with no concern for social exclusion or the destruction of nature?¹⁰⁴

Although Francis did not cite *Laudato Si'* as he did in Quito, the ideas are identical to the ones in his encyclical. The mindless pursuit of profit is a major theme in *Laudato Si'*, and Francis spread this message in Bolivia much in the same way that he did in Ecuador.

Finally, Francis flew to Paraguay where he said mass for more than one million Paraguayans in Bando Norte, a village on a perennial flood plain and one of the poorest neighborhoods on the continent.¹⁰⁵ In front of a crowd of landless and destitute, Francis reminded the members of the audience that they are important and worth being cared for: "[I couldn't leave Paraguay] without being on *your* land."¹⁰⁶ Speaking later on Sunday night to a

¹⁰³ Al Jazeera 2015, <http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2015/11/29/pope-francis-visits-central-african-republic.html> and Dias, TIME 2015, <http://time.com/3953802/pope-francis-bolivia/>

¹⁰⁴ Quoted in Vatican Radio 2015, http://en.radiovaticana.va/news/2015/07/10/pope_francis_speech_at_world_meeting_of_popular_movements/11572

¹⁰⁵ Matranga, CBS News 2015, <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/pope-francis-visits-paraguay-slum-gives-mass-to-1-million/>

¹⁰⁶ Quoted in the Associated Press 2015, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jul/12/pope-francis-paraguay-asuncion-slum>.

crowd of national leaders, Francis stressed what he believed their priorities should be: “Putting bread on the table, putting a roof over the heads of one’s children, giving them health and an education – these are essential for human dignity, and business men and women, politicians, economists, must feel challenged in this regard. I ask them not to yield to an economic model which is idolatrous, which needs to sacrifice human lives on the altar of money and profit.”¹⁰⁷ In this address, Francis empowers the owners of these humble homes and stresses that they deserve their health and education. As he did in Ecuador and Bolivia, Francis emphasized that a profit-only mentality in economics has seriously harmful effects on both society and the environment. In each of the countries Francis visited, he focused on empowering the dignity of the poor and defenseless. He undoubtedly intended for the leaders of these nations to take his words to heart and help preserve the environment (and its inhabitants) in this way. While it is notable that Francis spread this message so soon before COP 21, what is more unusual is that, by his actions, Francis began to represent the ideas that he preached. This growth of ethical standing gave Francis a moral authority arguably unmatched by anyone else on the globe (at least with regard to climate issues).

During his trip to Latin America, Pope Francis increasingly acted like a politician and lobbyist. In a presidential campaign, candidates advertise platforms that they (in theory) believe will better the nation. Among other reasons, people vote for a certain candidate because they promote policies that they would like to see enacted. Ultimately, when policy is instituted and enforced, it is the ideas behind the policy that prescribe the actions that have physical effects on the constituents. Support for these ideas does not depend solely on their content. Rather, the character of the leader that is promoting these ideas has an *enormous* effect on the support that

¹⁰⁷ Quoted in the Associated Press 2015

policy will receive. Pope Francis is the perfect example of this idea. Although the content of his sermons is certainly important, the fact that Francis chose to visit criminals and those stricken by poverty has an enormous impact on his moral standing. I assert that Francis's actions began to garner a defender of the defenseless persona—and policy leaders across the globe began to invoke his name in support of environmental action. Millions of men, women, and children flocked to see Francis during his trip to South America, and this result would, for the most part, be replicated as he travelled to Cuba, the United States, and Africa. Francis was spreading his ideas, but he was also becoming a symbol for world leaders to rally behind.

Stop Two: Cuba, Congress, and The United Nations

Pope Francis doesn't take too much time off. Roughly a month after returning from his trip to South America, the Argentine pope arrived in Cuba—a nation that is poor, isolated from modern commerce with the United States, and full of political and social unrest. He met with both Fidel Castro and his brother, President Raul Castro. In front of a large crowd in Santiago, he preached on the importance of caring for those most unable to care for themselves—the unborn and the poor.¹⁰⁸ Building on his visit to South America, Francis's trip to Cuba continued to reinforce his image as a pope who cares for the groups that are least able to defend themselves. Francis's visit came at the same time that the United States and Cuba were discussing the reestablishment diplomatic relations. For this reason, a bulk of Francis's preaching was concerned with political freedom and peaceful reconciliation.¹⁰⁹ After visiting four poor Spanish-speaking countries, Francis's tour changed theme dramatically. When he left Cuba, he flew to the center of the world's most powerful and influential nation: Washington, D.C., USA.

¹⁰⁸ Burke, CNN 2015, <http://www.cnn.com/2015/09/20/world/pope-cuba-conflicts/>

¹⁰⁹ Miroff, The Washington Post 2015, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/the_americas/with-clean-streets-and-a-bit-of-suspense-cuba-awaits-pope-francis/2015/09/19/ee4a5ba6-5bf5-11e5-8475-781cc9851652_story.html?utm_term=.f1262f65f468

Although the United States is culturally and economically different from the countries he first visited, Francis still received an enormous amount of attention from the public. While his popularity certainly did not dwindle, Francis had a new agenda when he arrived in the District of Columbia.

Republican Speaker of the House John Boehner cried and cried during Pope Francis's historic address to a joint session of Congress. Democrat Vice President Joe Biden beamed and showcased his famous finger point.¹¹⁰ They may not share Francis's Latin American heritage, but these two Catholic politicians were unrestrictedly joyful to have the pope on Capitol Hill. Millions of Americans in total turned out in Washington D.C., New York, and Philadelphia.¹¹¹ Unlike his visits to Quito, Bando Norte, and Santiago, Francis was not in America to visit flood-stricken villages. He was there to make a statement, first at the U.S Congress and then at the UN Headquarters in New York, to the leaders of the world—particularly those that would be meeting in Paris in two-and-a-half months.

Before Francis, no other pope had ever addressed the U.S. Congress.¹¹² In his speech, Francis quoted from eight different pages in his encyclical.¹¹³ Invoking the names of famous Americans—Abraham Lincoln, Martin Luther King Jr., Dorothy Day, and Thomas Merton—Francis urged the American government to make “courageous” efforts to alter the path of short-sighted industrialism and consider every voice, not just those that make the most money. During his speech, Francis addressed poverty, technology ethics, environmental preservation, and societal issues:

¹¹⁰ Vieback, Washington Post 2015, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/powerpost/wp/2015/09/24/congress-mostly-behaved-during-the-popes-speech-and-of-course-boehner-cried/?utm_term=.059513522d24.

¹¹¹ Bacon, Leger and Madhandi, US News 2015, <http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/2015/09/27/pope-francis-wraps-up-us-visit-philadelphia/72923820/>.

¹¹² BBC News 2015, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-31159399>

¹¹³ Washington Post 2015, https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/social-issues/transcript-pope-franciss-speech-to-congress/2015/09/24/6d7d7ac8-62bf-11e5-8e9e-dce8a2a2a679_story.html?utm_term=.a286cebb80

In *Laudato Si'*, I call for a courageous and responsible effort to “redirect our steps” (*Laudato Si'*, 61), and to avert the most serious effects of the environmental deterioration caused by human activity. I am convinced that we can make a difference and I have no doubt that the United States – and this Congress – have an important role to play. Now is the time for courageous actions and strategies, aimed at implementing a “culture of care” (*ibid.*, 231) and “an integrated approach to combating poverty, restoring dignity to the excluded, and at the same time protecting nature” (*ibid.*, 139). “We have the freedom needed to limit and direct technology” (*ibid.*, 112); “to devise intelligent ways of... developing and limiting our power” (*ibid.*, 78); and to put technology “at the service of another type of progress, one which is healthier, more human, more social, more integral” (*ibid.*, 112). In this regard, I am confident that America’s outstanding academic and research institutions can make a vital contribution in the years ahead.¹¹⁴

Pope Francis’s speech was not focused solely on *Laudato Si'* but he did discuss many different ideas that come from his encyclical. It seems that Francis understands that the United States wields political, economic, and influential power to an extent that no other country can claim. As the world’s second greatest carbon polluter and largest economy, the United States will have an enormous role in any attempt to seriously combat climate change.¹¹⁵ Francis is appealing to the Congressional leaders’ sense of responsibility—they have the power to make policy that will positively affect those all over the world. The direct lobbying of a legislative body, of the United States no less, adds to the increased political role that Francis gave *Laudato Si'*. After leaving Capitol Hill, Francis travelled to New York City where he spoke in front of the diplomats that would directly negotiate at COP 21.

Francis’s address to the UN was his greatest opportunity to appeal directly to environmental policy makers and he prepared an extensive speech. Citing *Laudato Si'* many times, he spoke about the UN’s ability to create international laws and encourage national laws, discussed how the same attitudes that dirty our planet allow poverty to grow, denounced the

¹¹⁴ Quoted in the Washington Post 2015

¹¹⁵ Scott & Sam, Bloomberg News 2016, <https://www.bloomberg.com/graphics/2016-us-vs-china-economy/>, European Union Joint Research Center 2016, <http://edgar.jrc.ec.europa.eu/overview.php?v=CO2ts1990-2014&sort=des9>

racial and ethnic inequality across the globe, and several other environmentally-related topics.¹¹⁶

The topic Francis discussed most passionately was the inexcusable culture of waste that mankind has developed:

The misuse and destruction of the environment are also accompanied by a relentless process of exclusion. In effect, a selfish and boundless thirst for power and material prosperity leads both to the misuse of available natural resources and to the exclusion of the weak and disadvantaged, either because they are differently abled (handicapped), or because they lack adequate information and technical expertise, or are incapable of decisive political action. Economic and social exclusion is a complete denial of human fraternity and a grave offense against human rights and the environment. The poorest are those who suffer most from such offenses, for three serious reasons: they are cast off by society, forced to live off what is discarded and suffer unjustly from the abuse of the environment. They are part of today's widespread and quietly growing "culture of waste."¹¹⁷

The long and powerful speech was nearly 4,000 words in total. In addition to the many ideas that Francis discussed, he stressed the importance of the upcoming conference in Paris and the need for environmental concern to trump individual interests: "The present time invites us to give priority to actions which generate new processes in society, so as to bear fruit in significant and positive historical events' (cf. *Evangelii Gaudium*, 223). We cannot permit ourselves to postpone 'certain agendas' for the future. The future demands of us critical and global decisions in the face of world-wide conflicts which increase the number of the excluded and those in need."¹¹⁸ Sixty-three days after Francis spoke to the UN General Assembly in New York, ambassadors and heads of state began negotiating the Paris Agreement. In his trip to the United States, Francis called policy makers, heads of state, and ambassadors world-wide to support the negotiations in France. This speech was perhaps Francis's most explicit involvement with COP 21. In New York, the pope had the opportunity to promote *Laudato Si'* directly to the men and women that

¹¹⁶ The Salt Lake Tribune 2015, <http://www.sltrib.com/home/2991384-155/transcript-of-pope-francis-un-speech>

¹¹⁷ Quoted in the Salt Lake Tribune 2015

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

met in Paris two months later. In Francis's trip to the Americas, he actively took on the role of environmental action promoter, champion of the poor, and international lobbyist. The diffusion of his ideas and, perhaps even more so, the diffusion of his personality, continued to cement Francis as a symbol of the moral obligation to care for the environment.

Stop Three: Africa

When Pope Francis left Fiumicino Airport in Rome for Nairobi, Kenya, there were five days until the beginning of the negotiations in Paris. To a certain degree, it seems Francis was satisfied with the work he had done to influence the conference, and his trip to Africa had an accordingly different focus. Although Francis did discuss COP 21 while in Kenya, he did not mention his encyclical and would not do so in Uganda or the Central African Republic.¹¹⁹ In Kenya, Francis visited the Nairobi UN Office. While there, he urged both individual nations and the body of nations as a whole to combat climate change: "We are confronted with a choice which cannot be ignored: either to improve or to destroy the environment."¹²⁰ Francis concluded by stressing directly the importance of the meeting in Paris and warned of the "catastrophic" consequences that could result from the failure of the conference to produce a sufficient agreement. Although it is clear that Francis wanted to address COP 21 before it started, it is equally clear that he did not focus on promoting *Laudato Si's* ideas during his trip.

Central-Eastern Africa absolutely suffers because of climate change. It also suffers greatly from gang and terrorist violence and serious political and social instability.¹²¹ During Francis's trip to Kenya, Uganda, and the Central African Republic, he chose to stress the

¹¹⁹ The Jordan Times 2015, <http://www.jordantimes.com/news/world/huge-crowds-pope-francis-celebrates-first-mass-africa>

¹²⁰ Quoted in the Jordan Times 2015

¹²¹ Fox News 2015, <http://www.foxnews.com/world/2015/01/18/leader-christian-militia-arrested-in-central-african-republic.html>, The Houston Chronicle 2013, <http://www.chron.com/news/nation-world/article/A-look-at-major-terror-attacks-in-East-Africa-4835723.php>

importance of peace, unity, and tolerance. While in Kenya, Francis criticized the illegal trafficking of diamonds, ivory, and other resources, reasoning that this practice fuels political instability and violence.¹²² In Uganda, Pope Francis praised the country's government for accepting many refugees who fled violence in nearby nations. The pope further stressed the need for peace in the region by honoring the Christian martyrs that were killed by Ugandan kings for preaching their faith.¹²³ In the Central African Republic, Christian and Muslim populations are deeply divided: they live in strictly self-segregated regions and have become increasingly violent since 2013.¹²⁴ Pope Francis met with representatives from the Christian and Muslim community and stressed that unless the two sides could set aside their differences, they would continue to suffer "from hate, incomprehension and a lack of peace."¹²⁵ As he did in South America, Cuba, and the United States, Francis met with heads of state or state representatives (or both) in each of the African countries he visited.¹²⁶ While Francis certainly hoped to influence the political community in each nation, his agenda was markedly different from his other trips. Whether because Francis visited so soon before COP 21 began (and the subsequent lack of time for his influence to sink in), his focus on non-environmental issues, or an overall culture difference, none of these three countries cited the pope or his encyclical at the conference in Paris. By the time Francis returned to Rome, COP 21 was underway. Pope Francis had been away from Rome for almost a month during the time between June and December. His three trips represent an enormous increase in international travel and political lobbying.

¹²² The Jordan Times 2015

¹²³ Waswa, Chimp Reports 2015, <http://www.chimpreports.com/full-speech-pope-francis-commends-ugandas-for-welcoming-refugees/>

¹²⁴ Al Jazeera 2015, <http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2015/11/29/pope-francis-visits-central-african-republic.html>

¹²⁵ Quoted in Al Jazeera 2015

¹²⁶ Wooden, Catholic News Services 2015, <http://www.catholicnews.com/services/englishnews/2015/pope-to-visit-africa-nov-25-30-including-central-african-republic.cfm>

Increased Political Activity

During Pope John Paul II's papacy, he traveled to the United States five times, Poland nine times, and to a grand total of 129 countries.¹²⁷ From 2006 to 2009, Pope Benedict XVI averaged three foreign trips per year and his is the oldest pope to travel outside of Europe.¹²⁸ The pope is absolutely a public figure and it is common for him to travel abroad and preach to people of different cultures. Pope Francis is no exception to this rule; in the first four years of his papacy, Francis has spent nearly two full months outside of Rome.¹²⁹ This precedent aside, I assert that Francis was uncharacteristically more internationally involved from June to December of 2016. Furthermore, I assert that this increase in international activity was synonymous with an increase in political activity. The following table provides data that leads us to that conclusion.

¹²⁷ USCCB n.d., <http://www.usccb.org/about/leadership/holy-see/john-paul-ii/pope-john-paul-ii-journeys-outside-of-italy.cfm>

¹²⁸ Guruge, Popes and the Papacy 2012, <http://popes-and-papacy.com/wordpress/pope-benedict-xvi-266-oldest-pope-to-travel-abroad-since-1400-and-a-few-all-time-records/>, Zimmerman, Catholic News Service 2013, <http://www.catholicnews.com/services/englishnews/2013/pope-benedict-has-made-24-trips-outside-italy-during-pontificate.cfm>, Wikipedia 2017, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_journeys_of_Pope_Benedict_XVI#cite_note-1

¹²⁹ NCR Staff, The National Catholic Reporter 2017, <https://www.ncronline.org/blogs/ncr-today/pope-francis-trips-outside-italy>

Table 3: Pope Francis's International Trips from 2013 to 2016¹³⁰

Year	Time of Year	Days Spent Abroad	Days Spent Outside Europe	Countries Visited
2013	January-June	0	0	0
	July-December	8	8	1
2014	January-June	3	3	3
	July-December	10	5	4
2015	January-June	8	7	3
	July-December	24	24	9
2016	January-June	11	7	4
	July-December	8	0	4

The first takeaway from this table is Francis's increased international activity. In 2015, Francis spent substantially more time outside of the Vatican *and* substantially more time outside of Europe than in other years. It should be noted of Francis's 2015 trips that he only spent seven days in two countries before the end of June (and the subsequent release of *Laudato Si'*). The twenty-four days he spent travelling to ten countries from July to December alone account for greater amount of time and number of countries than the totals of his visits in 2013, 2014, and 2016. We can confidently conclude that Francis spent more time abroad and visited more countries in the stretch of time after *Laudato Si'*'s publication and before the beginning of COP 21. This increase in travelling coincides with an increase in political activity.

Most of Francis's trips were short, two to three day visits. These trips allow Francis to make a public appearance, visit with the local clergy, and preach to a body of Catholics that are not ordinarily available to him. Despite the surface level similarity to Francis's promotional

¹³⁰ Zimmerman, Catholic News Service 2013, Wikipedia 2017, and NCR Staff, The National Catholic Reporter 2017

visits from June to December of 2015, these trips are usually isolated and without an overarching theme. For example, from September to November of 2014, Francis visited Albania for a day, France for a day, and Turkey for three days. This country-hopping is sharply different from Francis's visits in the second half of 2015. Besides Francis's visits to Latin America, the United States, and Africa in 2015, he only left the Vatican for a period of more than five days a total of four times during 2013 to 2016. In 2013, Francis spent eight days in Brazil, in 2014 he spent five days in South Korea, in 2015 he spent seven days in Sri Lanka and the Philippines, and in 2016 he spent seven days in Cuba and Mexico. Of these four trips, two were brought about by a major Catholic event. When Francis visited Brazil in 2013, it was to celebrate World Youth Day—an enormously popular Catholic gathering. World Youth Day is celebrated every two or three years and in 2013 drew nearly ten million Catholics to participate in events and listen to special preachers.¹³¹ Similarly, in 2014, Francis visited South Korea to celebrate Asian Youth Day—a similar but admittedly less monumental youth event.¹³² These facts insinuate that Francis rarely takes long trips unless he is attending a major event. For this reason, it is particularly striking that Francis took three extended international trips during the second half of 2015 and that *none* of these trips coincided with some sort of celebratory gathering. This evidence points to the following conclusion: Francis's trips to Latin America, the United States, and Africa were primarily for political purposes. Pope Francis took uncharacteristically long trips during this time period and attended a grand total of zero major Catholic events. Rather than attend celebrations, he preached on the environment and met with world leaders. The timing of Francis's deviation from his standard procedure is not coincidental. Pope Francis mindfully and intentionally increased his international and political activity during the buildup to COP 21.

¹³¹ Catholic World News 2013, <https://www.catholicculture.org/news/headlines/index.cfm?storyid=18655>

¹³² Jenkins, TIME 2014, <http://time.com/3115024/pope-francis-sewol-south-korean-youth-asian-youth-day/>

IV. Francis's Effects

It is not always easy to sell climate change policy. In *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis claims that one of the reasons nations are so resistant to adopt environmentally sustainable business practices is because they would lose money.¹³³ Francis counters this idea by claiming that we should not measure the health and success of a country solely by looking at their GDP.¹³⁴ Many people, though, can benefit from a thriving economy. Countless men and women hold industrial jobs and benefit from companies that engage in less than responsible consumption models. Both business owners and common workers benefit fiscally because of the advances in industrial production and oil and gas operations. Similarly, the coal, oil, and gas industries provide energy to countless Americans. In 2014, the United States generated 4 trillion kilowatt-hours of electricity and of that 4 trillion, 2.67 trillion were generated by coal, natural gas and petroleum.¹³⁵ Furthermore, fossil fuels accounted for 66% of the global energy production for 2014.¹³⁶ For this reason and for numerous others, there is a large amount of resistance to the process of voluntarily limiting and regulating traditional energy production industries. The resistance is even stronger when nearly two hundred nations try to reach a compromise on a single agreement; the diplomatic complications are countless. Additionally, even after an agreement is met, there is no guarantee that the individual governments will comply with the wishes of the representatives that attended the conference. Because of the plethora of obstacles facing COP 21, the advocates for a unilateral environmental agreement wanted to garner as much support for this cause as possible. Ambassadors and heads of state promoted the conference and

¹³³ Francis, 78

¹³⁴ Ibid., 127

¹³⁵ U.S EIA 2016. https://www.eia.gov/electricity/monthly/epm_table_grapher.cfm?t=epmt_1_1

¹³⁶ The Shift Project 2015, <http://www.tsp-data-portal.org/Breakdown-of-Electricity-Generation-by-Energy-Source#tspQvChart>

stressed the need for a new global policy. Interestingly, as a way of arguing for the moral necessity to care for the Earth, governments increasingly cited Pope Francis and *Laudato Si'*. Pope Francis's encyclical and his status as a defender of the environment and an advocate for the groups most hurt by climate change made Francis a desirable talisman for foreign leaders to rally behind. By their initial reaction to *Laudato Si'* and their citing of the pontiff in Paris, certain countries revealed Francis's influence on the environmental policy-making community.

These responses are in no way uniform or continuous. Given an understanding of *Laudato Si'* and the Paris Agreement and a knowledge of the history of the promotion of Francis's encyclical, we are left with the following overarching question: How do we measure the influence of *Laudato Si'*? Upon closer inspection, several questions need to be asked and answered. How much more attention did Francis's encyclical receive than those of the past? Which kind of countries or organizations reacted positively to the release of *Laudato Si'*? Which countries cited Francis at COP 21 and which did not? What characteristics do these nations share? Were the countries that cited Francis more likely to react positively to the Paris Agreement? The Catholic Church is an enormous organization and as its leader, Pope Francis, wields a considerable deal of power, especially because of his charisma and popularity. The existence of Francis's power is clear, but the question that is truly worth investigating is this: What kind of power is it?

Chapter Five: Measuring Francis's Influence

How much credit do we give Francis? The pope, even with his reputation for continuous forays into the realm of politics, was especially politically active from June 2015 to the end of the year. He met presidents, prime ministers, senators, legislators, ambassadors, and diplomats, published *Laudato Si'*, gave speeches, visited the poor and the mighty, and elicited colossal crowds just by his very presence. His name and that of his encyclical were mentioned in houses, new studios, state capitals, and search engines worldwide. The evidence of Francis's influence is ubiquitous but concrete evaluations of this influence are anything but—the explanations frequently fail to give a satisfying account of the measure of Francis's power. We want to know the kind of power that Francis wields but it is difficult to see when and where we should stop evaluating his influence. Do we limit this investigation to the pursuit of analyzing the nature of the countries that mention Francis at COP 21? Should reaction to and the ultimate implementation of the Paris Agreement be a measure of *Laudato Si'*'s success? If in thirty years, global temperatures peak at 3 degrees Celsius instead of at the 2 degrees goal specified by the Paris Agreement, has Francis failed in his environmental endeavor? The latter two questions would require such extensive data, include so many independent variables, and demand such a considerable amount of time waiting for events to play out that the measure of Francis's influence would easily be confused or lost. Difficulties aside, a partial quantification of Francis's influential power is not impossible. By comparing Francis, his encyclical, and country's reactions to past popes, encyclicals, and other countries, we can gather an idea of the reach of Francis's influence—how far across the globe it spread, to what kinds of cultures it reached, to what degree it permeated political power, and the kind of effects it elicited. In this chapter, I will

first describe the popularity of *Laudato Si'* relative to other papal encyclicals. In addition, I will provide an analysis of the prevalence of *Laudato Si'* in American newspapers. I will then analyze several demographic and developmental aspects of the countries that mentioned Francis at COP 21 in an attempt to better understand the characteristics of the nations who are most strongly affected by the pope. Finally, I will categorize the reaction to *Laudato Si'* into the three groups: Those that supported *Laudato Si'* because of their political leaning, those that did not support *Laudato Si'* because of their political leaning, and those that supported *Laudato Si'* because of a genuine reaction to the encyclical and Francis's promotion. It is my hope that these descriptions and metrics will provide a clearer depiction of Francis's influential power.

I. Popularity and Prevalence Data

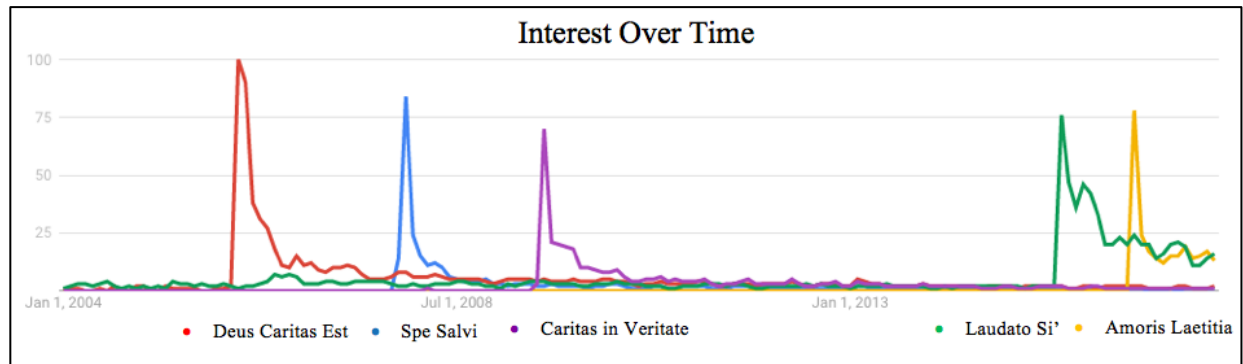
As previously stated, papal encyclicals do not provoke wild popularity—they aren't best sellers, they aren't fun to read, and ordinarily their constituencies are limited to the halls of the Vatican. *Laudato Si'* is not an ordinary encyclical. Not only was Francis's environmental encyclical more popular among the Curia, it was also vastly more popular worldwide than past encyclicals. One of the ways we can measure this popularity is through the amount of attention that *Laudato Si'* received on the internet relative to past encyclicals. This is certainly not a fool-proof method of assessing the popularity of an encyclical, but it can provide an insightful comparison of *Laudato Si'* and past encyclicals. In order to gather an idea of the amount of interest the average papal document receives, I will include a total of four encyclicals and one apostolic exhortation in this study: *Deus Caritas Est*, *Spe Salvi*, *Caritas in Veritate*, *Laudato Si'*, and *Amoris Laetitia*. The first three are Pope Benedict XVI's encyclicals and *Amoris Laetitia* is a 2016 apostolic exhortation (two degrees of magnitude of importance lower than an encyclical)

by Pope Francis.¹³⁷ As I discuss in my last chapter, *Amoris Laetitia* also contains politically charged themes. I include *Amoris Laetitia* in this study because I want to evaluate Francis's overall popularity (which would affect *Amoris Laetitia*) as well as the specific combination of his popularity and that of *Laudato Si'*.

Absolute Popularity

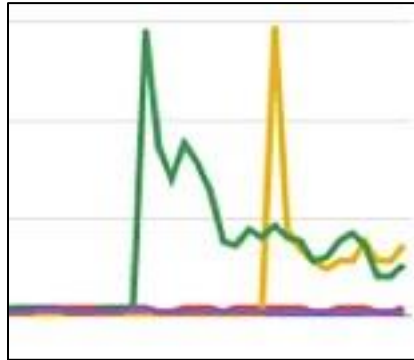
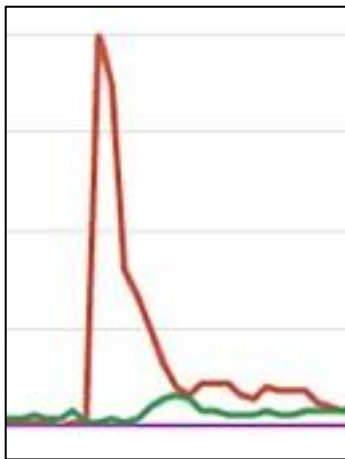
The following three figures come from a Google Trends study that includes each of the five papal works. This study first identifies the specific instance in time when any of the five search queries accounted for the highest percentage of all Google searches worldwide. It is important to understand that this reference point is *not* the time at which a certain term was searched for the most, but rather the time at which that particular query accounted for the greatest percentage of global searches. After this datum is determined, the popularity of the other search terms (in this study, the other papal works) are plotted in relation to this datum. A point on the graph that receives a '50' score means that at that particular time, the papal work that corresponds to that value was 50% as popular as the instance of maximum popularity with regard to the percentage of total searches.

¹³⁷ Eternal Word Television Network n.d.

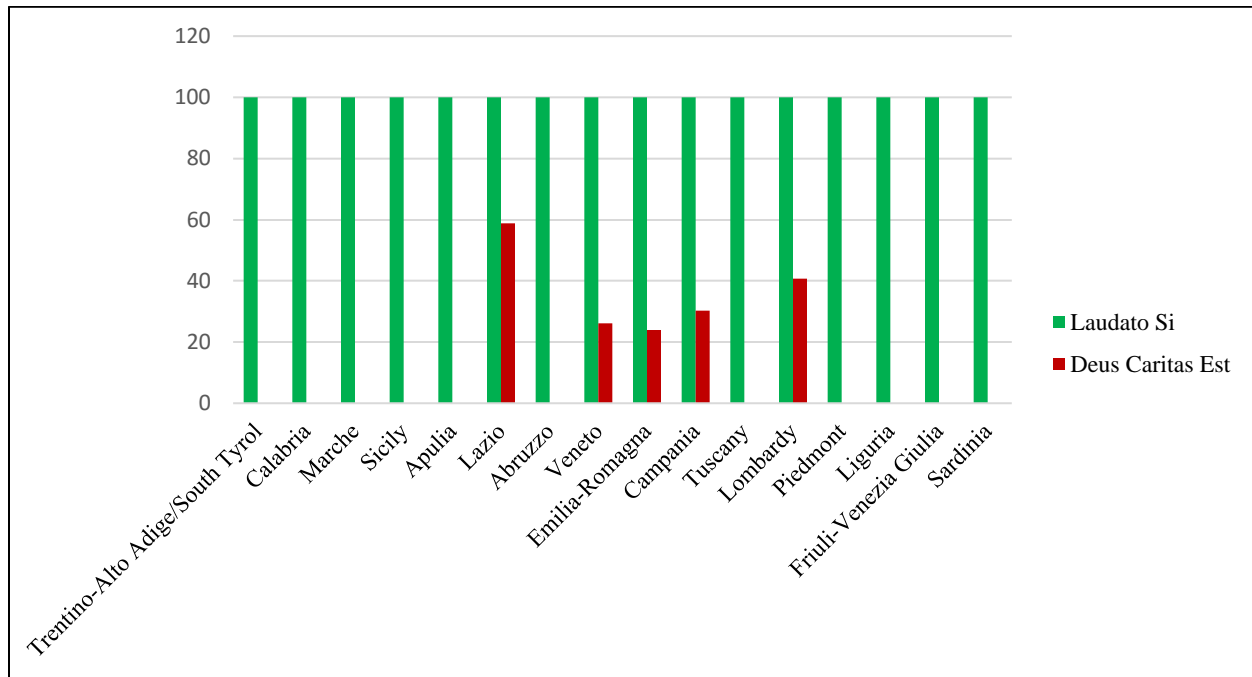
Figure 1: Worldwide Encyclical Popularity Comparison¹³⁸

Surprisingly, *Laudato Si'* does not hold the most popular search period—that title belongs to Benedict's *Deus Caritas Est*. Besides *Deus Caritas Est*, the four other works have a peak at roughly the same value—around 75% of the peak popularity of Benedict's first encyclical. However, this graph reveals an interesting trend regarding the post-peak popularity of these five works. Every work except for *Laudato Si'* tapers off significantly after reaching its maximum popularity. *Laudato Si'*, in contrast, continues to be searched for a considerable length of time after its release. This period of prolonged interest notably includes the period of promotion in between the release of *Laudato Si'* and the beginning of COP 21. In support of this idea, we can see that *Laudato Si'* has a secondary peak in September of 2015—exactly when Francis was in the United States speaking to Congress and the UN General Assembly.

¹³⁸ Worldwide Encyclical Popularity Comparison, Google Trends 2017, <https://trends.google.com/trends/explore?date=all&q=laudato%20si,deus%20caritas%20est,amor%20laetitia,caritas%20in%20veritate,spe%20salvi>.

Figure 2: Laudato Si' Post-Peak**Figure 3: Deus Caritas Est Post-Peak**

By themselves, these graphs are not enlightening. We now know that *Laudato Si'* was popular for a longer period of time than past encyclicals, but there is still a good deal of uncertainty with regard to how much these terms were searched with regard to absolute numbers. A closer investigation of the areas where these works were more and less popular reveals significant information.

Figure 4: Normalized Italian Regional Popularity—Laudato Si’ and Deus Caritas Est¹³⁹

This data is calculated differently than the time graph data. Previously, a 100% value corresponded to a particular instance when a search query held the highest percent of total search queries (relative to the other terms in question). For this geographical study, popularity is measured across the entire specified time period, rather than by using time-specific data points. More clearly, a 100% score represents the query that was searched for the most during the desired time period. A 50% score means that that query was searched for half as much during the time period. It should be noted that this particular graph is normalized. In the original data, different regions had different values that described how the popularity in each region varies in relation to each other. Such data would allow us to see which region searched for the papal documents the most. I do not believe that this relationship is particularly important for this study. In the interest of providing a clear comparison of the popularity between the papal works, I have

¹³⁹ Regional Encyclical Popularity Comparison, Italy, Google Trends 2017, <https://trends.google.com/trends/explore?date=all&geo=IT&q=laudato%20si,deus%20caritas%20est>.

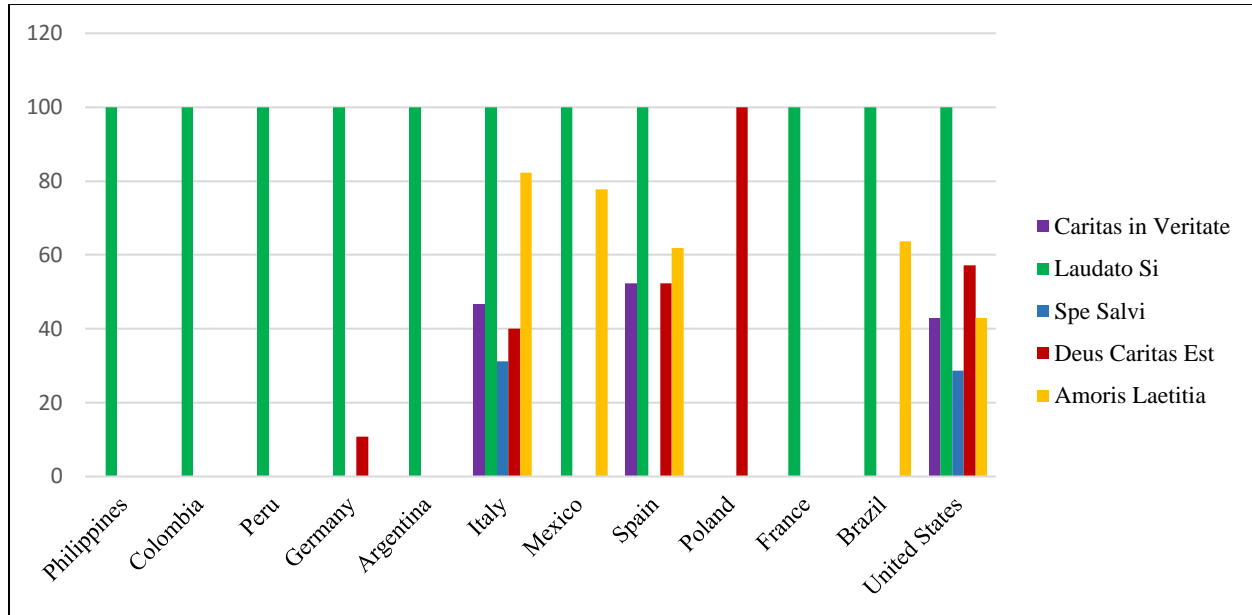
normalized the data so that the highest value for each region is 100. Figure 4 represents the popularity of *Laudato Si'* and *Deus Caritas Est* in Italy from 2004 to the present. I have chosen to analyze the popularity in Italy because it is precisely in this country where *Deus Caritas Est* received its peak popularity—the same peak popularity that was greater than any of the other four papal works. When we look at the regional breakdown of aggregate popularity in Italy, *Laudato Si'* is more popular than *Deus Caritas Est* in every region in Italy. The most noteworthy region is Lazio—the region that contains Vatican City. Every papal work except for *Laudato Si'* received its instance of maximum popularity from the Lazio region in Italy. Even in this region, *Laudato Si'* was nearly twice as popular over the course of 2004 to the present. It should be noted that *Laudato Si'* is more popular than *Deus Caritas Est* despite the fact that Benedict's encyclical was published roughly a decade before Francis's and thus had significantly more time to accrue searches. The following question remains: Why does *Deus Caritas Est* receive a higher popularity percentage than *Laudato Si'*? Following this combination of data, I believe the conclusion is clear, even if the causes are not. For whatever reason, when *Deus Caritas Est* was published, there was a lull in internet searches in Lazio. Perhaps there were more small topics or less searches overall. Regardless, when Benedict's encyclical was released, it received a considerable amount of attention and that attention was magnified because of the lack of interest elsewhere. For this reason, despite the fact that *Laudato Si'* was more searched for considerably more than *Deus Caritas Est* in absolute terms (and in a much shorter time period), the latter papal work garnered a higher *percentage* of active searches at the time.

Global Popularity

Laudato Si' easily outpaces all of Benedict's encyclicals and Francis's *Amoris Laetitia* with regard to total popularity. Another distinction sets the Argentine pope's work ahead of the rest: many more countries were interested in Francis's encyclical than they were about the other

four works. Figure 5 is a graph of normalized popularity of the five works with regard to specific countries.

Figure 5: Normalized Regional Popularity—All Five Works¹⁴⁰



The data that makes up this graph is calculated the same way that the Italian regional popularity graph's data is calculated: values represent the aggregate popularity over a specified time period. For this graph, the time period is the same as that of the Italian study, 2004 to present. The figure shows that most of the works are popular in Italy, the United States, and a few other places. With the exception of Poland (notably the home country of Pope Benedict XVI), *Laudato Si'* dominates every country. Furthermore, in many countries, *Laudato Si'* holds 100% of the popularity, meaning that in comparison to the country with the highest percentage of popularity of *Laudato Si'* (in this case, the Philippines), the other four works were not 1% as popular. Because this plot is normalized, we do not see the difference in popularity from region to region. For this reason, it should be noted that *Laudato Si'* is not necessarily the only papal work to

¹⁴⁰ Worldwide Encyclical Popularity Comparison, Google Trends 2017

register popularity in France and *Deus Caritas Est* is not necessarily the only papal work to register popularity in Poland. Nonetheless, this plot paints a clear picture as to the global reach of *Laudato Si'* in relation to other papal works. *Laudato Si'* registers a high popularity in Latin American nations (Colombia, Peru, and Argentina) and developed western nations (France, Germany, and the USA). It is also important to understand that these nations are those that registered the highest percent popularity in comparison to the Philippines. *Laudato Si'* was massively more popular than the other four papal works in many other nations, including the United Kingdom, Venezuela, Sweden, Ecuador, and Paraguay—countries that do not register a value in comparison to the countries depicted in Figure 5.¹⁴¹ The reason that these nations are not represented in Figure 5 is that in the countries in question, Francis's encyclical was, percentage-wise, much less popular than it was in the Philippines.

American Media Coverage

An extraordinary volume of searches for *Laudato Si'* does not necessarily insinuate that those searching for the environmental encyclical eventually came to believe in the ideas Francis is promoting—it further cannot prove that the searchers even read Francis's encyclical. Although the data from the previous section cannot describe the effects that *Laudato Si'* had on its searchers, it does appear as if the general population was more interested with Francis's encyclical than they were in the other papal works. Though Google Trends can give insight into

¹⁴¹Regional Encyclical Popularity Comparison, United Kingdom, Venezuela, Sweden, and Ecuador, Google Trends 2017,
<https://trends.google.com/trends/explore?date=all&geo=GB&q=laudato%20si,deus%20caritas%20est,amoris%20laetitia,spe%20salvi,caritas%20in%20veritate>,
<https://trends.google.com/trends/explore?date=all&geo=VE&q=laudato%20si,deus%20caritas%20est,amoris%20laetitia,spe%20salvi,caritas%20in%20veritate>,
<https://trends.google.com/trends/explore?date=all&geo=SE&q=laudato%20si,deus%20caritas%20est,amoris%20laetitia,spe%20salvi,caritas%20in%20veritate>,
<https://trends.google.com/trends/explore?date=all&geo=EC&q=laudato%20si,deus%20caritas%20est,amoris%20laetitia,spe%20salvi,caritas%20in%20veritate>

the amount of attention *Laudato Si'* received relative to other papal documents, this account is by no means an exhaustive measurement. Another way we can quantify the unusual level of interest is by evaluating the extent to which *Laudato Si'* permeated the media. Clearly, stories are represented to different degrees in different countries. Although there is undoubtedly a large variance with respect to the newspapers of different nations, I assert that we can learn a sizable amount about the form of *Laudato Si'*'s influence by examining its presence in major American news medias. Understandably, papal works appear to receive the most attention shortly after they are published. The extent of that initial attention and the subsequent drop off or continuation of interest varies greatly with regard to the five works considered in the previous section (*Deus Caritas Est*, *Spe Salvi*, *Caritas in Veritate*, *Laudato Si'*, and *Amoris Laetitia*). The following table lists the number of articles that *The Wall Street Journal*, *The New York Times*, and *The Washington Post* printed or posted that mentioned each papal document. I track the number of mentions each work received in the first month that it was released, the month after that, and so on up to six months after the initial release date.

Table 4: Papal Work Mentions in Major American Newspapers¹⁴²

Encyclical	Months Since Release	The Wall Street Journal	The Washington Post	The New York Times
Laudato Si' June 18, 2015	0	21	52	42
	1	5	7	5
	2	2	7	2
	3	10	39	22
	4	3	4	2
	5	2	2	2
Amoris Laetitia April 8, 2016	0	3	8	13
	1	0	0	0
	2	0	0	1
	3	0	1	1
	4	0	0	0
	5	0	0	0
Deus Caritas Est December 25, 2005	0	0	1	2
	1	0	1	5
	2	0	0	0
	3	3	1	0
	4	0	1	2
	5	0	0	0
Spe Salvi November 30, 2007	0	0	1	2
	1	0	0	0
	2	0	0	0
	3	0	0	0
	4	1	2	1
	5	0	0	0
Caritas in Veritate June 29, 2009	0	6	4	6
	1	0	0	1
	2	1	0	0
	3	0	1	1
	4	0	0	0
	5	0	0	1

¹⁴² This data was compiled using the Factiva news archive. In this study, I used the following search language: "Encyclical Name" OR "English Translation of Encyclical Name" AND "Pope Name" OR "Encyclical/Apostolic Exhortation" AND "Pope Name"

I did not include mentions in abstracts or duplicate articles

I began the date range with the encyclical's release date and ended the date range six months later on the same day

Although this data describes a trend in media coverage rather than search interest, the results share several similarities. In both studies, *Laudato Si'* experienced a greater interest at the time of its publication and a much larger degree of extended attention—no papal document came anywhere close to receiving as much attention as *Laudato Si'*. Out of Benedict XVI's three encyclicals, *Caritas in Veritate*, the last to be published, received the most attention from the selected news media. *Caritas in Veritate* was mentioned in a total of sixteen articles during the first month of its publication. The Washington Post alone ran more than three times as many articles that mentioned *Laudato Si'* in its first month since being released. Each of Benedict's encyclicals received a smattering of attention shortly after its release and several other sporadic mentions thereafter. Between *Deus Caritas Est*, *Spe Salvi*, and *Caritas in Veritate*, no encyclical received more than six mentions (by one individual newspaper) during a one month span and no encyclical was mentioned more than nine times by any particular newspaper.

Controversy and politics tend to make for better news than theology and church doctrine. Francis's apostolic exhortation *Amoris Laetitia* was both highly controversial and politically charged and accordingly received more attention from these major American newspapers than any of Benedict's encyclicals. Despite this increase in attention, *Amoris Laetitia* received only a fraction of the attention that *Laudato Si'* did. Twenty-four articles mentioned *Amoris Laetitia* within a month after its release—a substantially greater amount of coverage than any of Benedict's encyclicals. While this increase in coverage is not negligible, Francis's apostolic exhortation received only three mentions in the final five months of the study after this initial month of relative interest. This drop-off of media attention indicates that *Amoris Laetitia* received only 11.1% of its total mentions in the last five months of the study. In comparison, *Laudato Si'* received 49.8% of its total mentions in the five months after the first month of

coverage. One of the most important reasons that Francis's encyclical continued to be mentioned so frequently after its initial coverage is Francis's trip to the United States in late September of 2015 (three months after *Laudato Si'* was published). Indeed, *Laudato Si'* was mentioned a total of seventy-one times between September 18 to October 18 (31% of its total mentions during the six month span). This large chunk of mentions aside, media coverage of *Laudato Si'* indisputably persisted significantly more than it did for *Amoris Laetitia* or any of Benedict's encyclicals. This trend is summarized in the following table.

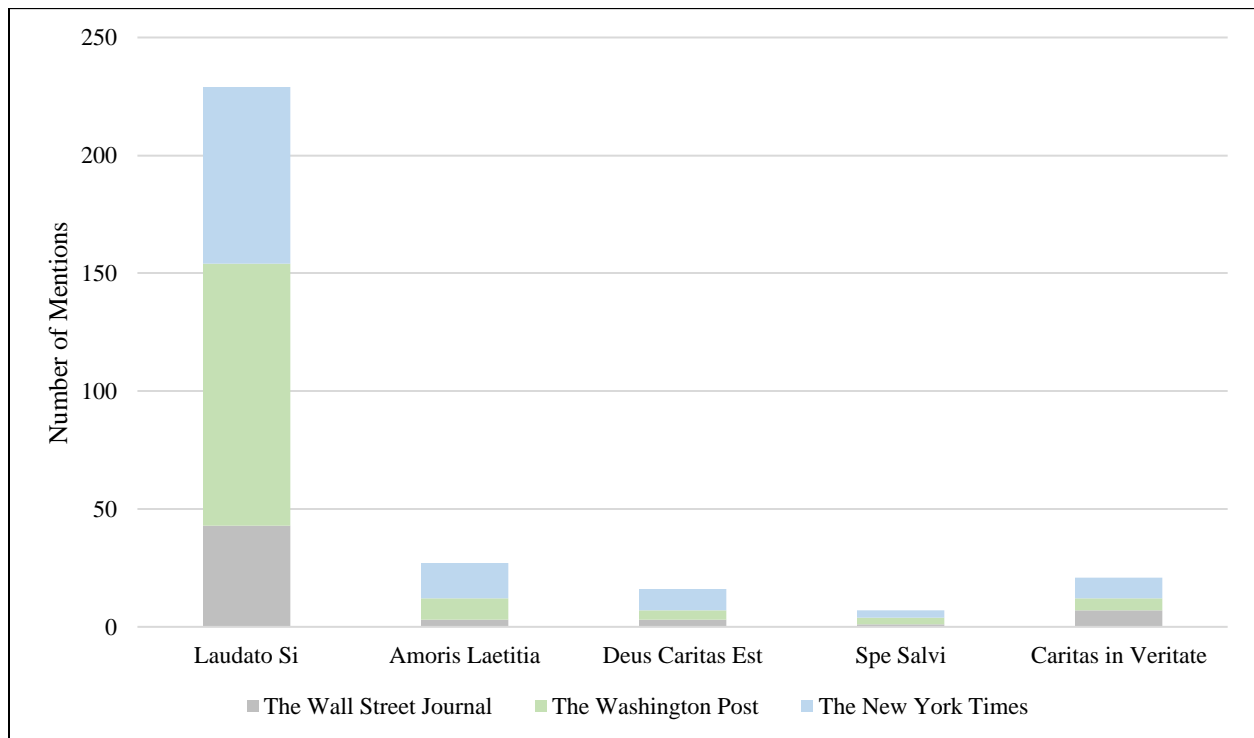
Table 5: Advanced Statistics of American Newspaper Coverage

Encyclical	Total Mentions	Mentions after the First Month	Percentage of Secondary Mentions	Number of Zero-Mention Periods	Average Periodic Mentions
<i>Laudato Si'</i>	229	114	49.8%	0	12.7
<i>Amoris Laetitia</i>	27	2	11.1%	12	1.5
<i>Deus Caritas Est</i>	16	13	81.3%	10	.9
<i>Spe Salvi</i>	7	4	57.1%	13	.4
<i>Caritas in Veritate</i>	21	5	23.8%	11	1.2

For each *Deus Caritas Est*, *Spe Salvi*, *Caritas in Veritate*, and *Amoris Laetitia*, there was an average of 11.5 instances where the papal work did not receive a single mention from at least one of the three newspapers. This study includes six months and three newspapers—this set-up translates into eighteen one-month periods of consideration for each encyclical or exhortation (six per newspaper). Thus, for the papal works other than *Laudato Si'*, out of the eighteen possible periods of coverage, an average of more than eleven periods reflect zero mentions. *Laudato Si'* does not have a single instance of zero mentions—all of the eighteen periods reflect at least two articles that refer to Francis's encyclical.

It is clear that *Laudato Si'* was a more continuous focus of attention than the other more transiently noteworthy papal documents. This fact is impressive; however, we should not let this trend diminish *Laudato Si'*'s domination of American newspapers in terms of absolute mentions. *Laudato Si'* received tremendously more coverage than *Deus Caritas Est*, *Spe Salvi*, *Caritas in Veritate*, and *Amoris Laetitia*. Respectively, these four works received a grand total of sixteen, seven, twenty-one, and twenty-seven mentions during the six month consideration period. *Laudato Si'* was mentioned 229 times during the same span of time—748% more mentions than the second most popular work (*Amoris Laetitia*). This dramatic discrepancy is displayed in the following plot.

Figure 6: Comparison of Total Mentions



The evidence is overwhelming; *Laudato Si'* was covered by major American newspapers vastly more than *Deus Caritas Est*, *Spe Salvi*, *Caritas in Veritate*, and *Amoris Laetitia*. While enlightening in many ways, these statistics present a problem similar to the Google Trends data.

Although we can conclude with confidence that *Laudato Si'* received an unusual amount of media attention, the implications of this phenomenon are not entirely clear.

Popularity Takeaways

With regard to internet search attention, *Laudato Si'* undeniably has a larger and more diverse overall popularity than past encyclicals and *Amoris Laetitia*. The superiority of Pope Francis's encyclical with regard to attention from American newspapers is equally clear. Francis's mobilization of the Curia to help spread *Laudato Si'*'s message and his extensive promotion of the encyclical, particularly by his various international trips, certainly contributed to this popularity. We can safely conclude that, for many reasons, *Laudato Si'* garnered much more recorded attention than any recent papal work. The following are what I consider to be reasonable implications of the previous fact. Because of this unusual popularity and coverage, more people were exposed to *Laudato Si'* and Pope Francis himself, whether through physical newspapers, websites, or online articles. There was a greater than normal amount of general interest in the pope and his encyclical. Through extensive reporting and internet searching, Francis and *Laudato Si'* were relevant for an extraordinary number of current events. We cannot say how well or otherwise Francis's ideas were received. With this data, we similarly cannot comment on the effects such popularity and coverage had on policy makers or the public. Nonetheless, Francis's ability to influence the interest of the public and of the media with the publication and promotion of a papal document is tangibly strong—he became a massive force in the world of public and media interest.

II. Statement Data from COP 21

We know that *Laudato Si'* received unprecedented attention at COP 21. Now we must answer the following question: What are the effects of this attention? The massive diffusion of Francis's ideas undoubtedly had effects on the beliefs, opinions, and actions of many people. Regrettably, this sort of data is difficult to gather and quantify. We do, however, have concrete evidence of this influence in the statements at COP 21. Six nations mentioned Pope Francis or *Laudato Si'* in their statements in Paris. By understanding in more depth who decided to cite Francis in their speech (and who didn't) we can draw a clearer picture of the power of Francis's influence.

Nearly two hundred countries sent delegations to the twenty first Conference of Parties in Paris. Out of those that attended, I found transcripts of speeches given by heads of state or their representatives for 165 nations. Many of the speeches shared the same focuses, themes, and repeated more or less the same party-line environmental ideas. Politically-correct language notwithstanding, there were plenty of interesting remarks. Venezuela quoted Cesar Chavez, Honduras spoke at length about the Virgin Mary, Iran quoted from the Quran, Cameroon cited Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and China included a line from *Les Miserables*.¹⁴³ Among these personal touches, six nations mentioned Pope Francis, and out of those six, five directly referred to *Laudato Si'*. Italy, the Holy See, Mauritius, Paraguay, and Ecuador quoted Francis's encyclical and Guatemala mentioned the pope and his environmental ideas but not *Laudato Si'*. Because of their proximity to the pope and the extent to which Catholicism is ingrained in their culture (especially the Holy See, obviously), it is not at all surprising that Italy and the Holy See

¹⁴³ COP 21 High-Level Statements et al. http://unfccc.int/meetings/paris_nov_2015/items/9331.php

mentioned Francis and his encyclical. Ecuador, Paraguay, and Guatemala all have several noticeable similarities, and Mauritius appears to be somewhat of an outlier. Below is a summary of noteworthy statistics in these six Francis nations. The values represent ranks from the 165 selected nations—a “1” corresponds to the country that accounts for the greatest percent of global emissions, percent Catholic population, etc.

Table 6: Global Rank of Energy, Climate, & Demographic Statistics of Francis Nations¹⁴⁴

Country	Percent of Global Emissions	Income/ Capita	Production Efficiency	Percent Catholic Population	Emissions/ Capita	Production/ Capita
Ecuador	59	77	34	21	78	35
Guatemala	84	109	82	32	113	104
Paraguay	105	100	9	15	108	38
Holy See	158	38	139	1	158	159
Italy	18	30	99	2	44	68
Mauritius	117	60	117	47	80	106

First, the data for the Holy See is glaringly imprecise; furthermore, I do not believe that these statistics matter very much for Vatican City. The Holy See's ambassador is a representative of the Curia and by extension, Pope Francis. There is no chance that such an ambassador would not refer to Francis's encyclical. I assert that the Francis's presence in Italy's statement should be explained as a result of the same effect, although perhaps to a lesser degree. Francis is not the head of the Italian government, but Catholicism is omnipresent in Italian culture and politics and

¹⁴⁴ COP 21 High-Level Statements

CIA World Factbook 2015, http://www.photius.com/rankings/economy/gdp_per_capita_2014_1.html

Worldometers 2017, <http://www.worldometers.info/geography/alphabetical-list-of-countries>

Catholic Hierarchy 2017

European Union Joint Research Center 2016

United States EIA 2015

There is not a large quantity of data available for the Holy See so the ranks are frequently either the highest or lowest possible by default. Ex-There is no emissions data for the Holy See, so they are tied for the lowest rank for Percent of Global Emissions. Additionally, because of the transience of people who work or live in Vatican City, it is difficult to measure income per capita. For this reason, this value was estimated.

we should therefore not be surprised to see them quoting one of the most popular men inside their geographic border. Mauritius—an island nation to the east of Madagascar—is an interesting case. It does not have any obvious link to the pope and Mauritius does not have a significantly Catholic population. Francis did not visit the island nation, and although they have legitimate environmental concerns, many African nations do as well, and none of them mentioned *Laudato Si'* in their statements. In her speech, President Gurib-Fakim reminds the COP of the considerable danger that Mauritius faces from rising ocean levels because they are surrounded by water.¹⁴⁵ Mauritius's geography is its most unique feature in comparison to other African nations—it is not significantly poorer or more of a carbon emitter. Perhaps the urgency of Mauritius's need for dynamic action to combat climate change or its geographic isolation led it to be more influenced by *Laudato Si'*. No other island nations (or any other nations that have glaring climate risks like Mauritius) cite Francis at COP 21. For these reasons, it appears as if Mauritius is, more or less, an independent case. A closer inspection of Ecuador, Paraguay, and Guatemala provide more insight into the specifics of Francis's influence.

¹⁴⁵ UNFCCC 2015, Mauritius

Table 7: Ecuador, Paraguay, & Guatemala Comparison¹⁴⁶

Country	Emissions/ Capita (Tons CO ₂)	Income/ Capita (U.S. Dollars/ Year)	Percent Catholic Population
Ecuador	2.588	10,200	70.67
Paraguay	0.811	6,100	76.91
Guatemala	0.703	5,200	60.59
Global Median	2.372	8,900	5.21
Global Mean	4.092	15,154	21.14
Latin America Median	2.372	10,600	74.67
Latin America Mean	2.506	11,227	72.29

One of the easiest statistics to notice is percent Catholic population: Ecuador, Paraguay, and Guatemala all have large Catholic populations. This makes intuitive sense—the more percent Catholic a nation is, the more likely they are to be influenced by the head of the Catholic Church. Additionally, all of these nations speak Spanish, the pope's first language. Culturally, these three nations have much in common with Pope Francis. Although it is certainly not common for countries to mention the pope at international conferences, it is absolutely believable that Francis would have the greatest influence on those nations that can most easily connect with him. This reasoning provokes a question: Why didn't the rest of Central and South America cite Francis in their statements? Drawing on the data from Table 7, we can see that the three Latin-American Francis nations are, more or less, poorer and emit less carbon dioxide than the rest of Central and South America. In short, these are developing nations. This correlation insinuates that Francis's words (and actions), so focused on the meek and poor, have a stronger effect on the nations that

¹⁴⁶ CIA World Factbook 2015

Worldometers 2017

Catholic Hierarchy 2017

European Union Joint Research Center 2016

United States EIA 2015

The United States is not included in the Latin American calculations

embody these characteristics. Admittedly, Ecuador is not entirely in the same stage of development as Paraguay and Guatemala, but they still do share plenty of developmental similarities. Another glaring factor that is not addressed in Table 7 is that Francis personally visited two of these three nations (Ecuador and Paraguay). Pope Francis shared *Laudato Si's* ideas with President Correa and President Cartes and these two men relayed the message at COP 21. The Latin American Francis nations definitely fall into the “developing nation” category as do many of the countries in South and Central America. Paraguay, Ecuador, and Guatemala’s ability to connect with *Laudato Si's* message certainly is a factor in the extent to which they are influenced by the encyclical. The fact that Francis visited two thirds of those countries further indicates that Francis has an ability to greatly influence the leaders he visits with—especially those that are culturally similar to him.

Statement Takeaways

Ultimately, only six countries mentioned Francis at COP 21. It is important to remember that, although it is a strong indicator, a papal citation in Paris is not the only form of Francis’s influence. *Laudato Si'* elicited many different reactions and not all of these reactions are as straightforward to document as speeches at a major environmental conference. Nonetheless, we can conclude that the combination of Francis and *Laudato Si'* had a power effect on the Holy See, Italy, Mauritius, Ecuador, Paraguay, and Guatemala. Furthermore, the trio of Latin American Francis countries is evidence of Francis’s strong ability to influence this region. By connecting with the humble state of developing nations and by personally promoting his message, Francis exerted considerable influential power on the leaders of these countries.

III. Reaction Data

The Enthusiastic Left

After the release of *Laudato Si'*, U.S. Senator and Democratic presidential primary candidate Bernie Sanders had high praise for Francis's encyclical: "Pope Francis's powerful message on climate change should change the debate around the world and become a catalyst for the bold actions needed to reverse global warming."¹⁴⁷ Former Secretary-General of the United Nations Kofi Annan said "I applaud [Pope Francis] for his strong moral and ethical leadership on climate change."¹⁴⁸ German minister for the environment Barbara Hendricks—a member of the left-leaning Social Democratic Party of Germany—called *Laudato Si'* "an incentive for everyone to work to protect the environment" whose "clear language [and] deep thought" will persuade even those "in conservative circles that try to talk down the devastating effect of climate change."¹⁴⁹ Pope Francis and *Laudato Si'* received a ringing endorsement from many of the most powerful people on the planet—Barack Obama, Kofi Annan, Ban Ki-moon, Christiana Figueres, Barbara Hendricks, Bernie Sanders, John Podesta, and the many others that gave speeches, released statements, or simply posted tweets in support of Francis's encyclical undoubtedly have a considerable amount of power and their comments on Francis's encyclical are noteworthy.¹⁵⁰ Their endorsement of *Laudato Si'* does not necessarily mean that these men and women were swayed to support stronger environmental action because of the pope. We should understand that, while they are certainly a testament to Francis's standing as a moral authority on climate

¹⁴⁷ Quoted in McGregor, The Washington Post 2015, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/on-leadership/wp/2015/06/19/the-reaction-to-pope-franciss-call-for-action-on-climate-change/?utm_term=.150604909412

¹⁴⁸ Quoted in McGregor, The Washington Post 2015

¹⁴⁹ Quoted in Schwartz, The New York Times 2015, <https://www.nytimes.com/live/updates-on-pope-francis-encyclical-on-climate-change/>

¹⁵⁰ Quoted in McGregor, The Washington Post 2015

change, these mentions represent a desire to harness Francis's reputation to accomplish their political agenda. Because of their political ideology, these endorsers already believed in the necessity for increased action to combat climate change. They may subscribe to particular ideas in *Laudato Si'*—the social causes of climate change, man's moral obligation, based on a theological argument, to care for the environment, etc.—or they may not. The bottom line is that this group of politicians want to encourage support for policies that they believe are important and they believe that Francis both expresses their opinion and will help spread their beliefs. This sort of partisan endorsement is not limited to the groups that support climate change policy—conservative leaders reacted to *Laudato Si'* across a spectrum that ranged from cautious deflection to outright rejection.

The Tentative Right

Rick Santorum—former third ranking Republican in the Senate, conservative runner-up to Mitt Romney's GOP nomination in 2012, and outspoken Catholic—did not praise *Laudato Si'* like his Democrat colleagues did. While running in the 2016 Republican primary, Santorum complained that the church should “stick to” its core teaching of theology and morality and questioned the legitimacy of the Vatican's study: “[The Church] has gotten it wrong a few times on science.”¹⁵¹ Rick Santorum is a strongly right-leaning Republican and does not believe that human activity is changing Earth's climate.¹⁵² His rejection of climate science in 2012 was unequivocal: “[Climate science] is just an excuse for more government control of your life. I've never been for any scheme or even accepted the junk science behind the whole narrative.”¹⁵³ He

¹⁵¹ Quoted in Fraga, The National Catholic Register 2015, <http://www.ncregister.com/daily-news/political-role-reversal-democrats-praise-encyclical-while-gop-remains-cauti>

¹⁵² Mullany, The New York Times 2015, <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/05/28/us/politics/rick-santorum-on-the-issues.html>

¹⁵³ Quoted in Samuelsohn, Politico 2012, <http://www.politico.com/story/2011/06/santorum-climate-change-is-junk-056599>

has cited his faith as a contributing factor to many of his stances on political issues, particularly his strong opposition of abortion.¹⁵⁴ However, Santorum's commitment to the catholic church apparently does not extend to support of Francis's encyclical. While Francis is certainly effective as a talisman for already-convinced climate activists, his influence does not appear to be able to sway the minds of politicians that had already made up their minds on this issue. After Francis's speech to Congress, rather than directly disagree with Francis's climate message, then Chairman of the Ways and Means Committee Paul Ryan (also a Catholic Republican) chose to focus on ideas that were more complementary to his ideology. The following is an excerpt from the statement he released after the address: "I could not agree more when Pope Francis says politics must serve the good of the human person. We must reject what he calls the 'throwaway culture' and embrace the marginalized and excluded. As he said in his encyclical *Laudato Si'*, 'We require a new and universal solidarity.'"¹⁵⁵ Finally, Republican presidential candidate Jeb Bush, a Catholic convert, declined to comment on *Laudato Si'* altogether. When asked to give his opinion on Francis's encyclical, Bush diplomatically said the following: "He [Francis] has every right to have a view on [climate change policy]" and added that he determines his economic policy from the state of the nation and not "from my bishops or my cardinals or my pope."¹⁵⁶

Although Paul Ryan and Jeb Bush do not lean as far right as Santorum does—I assert that this is a generally agreed upon assessment—they are both members of the Republican party. Some members of the GOP deny the existence of human-caused climate change and some do not, but they certainly do not make a point of expanding climate regulating policy. As evidence

¹⁵⁴ On the Issues 2006, http://www.ontheissues.org/2016/Rick_Santorum_Abortion.htm

¹⁵⁵ Quoted in Martorana, Paul Ryan Congressional Website 2015, <http://paulryan.house.gov/news/documentsingle.aspx?DocumentID=398373>

¹⁵⁶ Quoted in Fraga, The National Catholic Register 2015

for this idea, I offer the fact that the three top Republican 2016 presidential candidates (as measured by primary delegates)—Donald Trump, Ted Cruz, and Marco Rubio—focused on how environmental regulation hurts the economy and has little or no positive impact on the planet.¹⁵⁷ Both Ryan's and Bush's reactions to Francis's environmental urging indicate that, while they certainly do not want to publicly disagree with the pope outright, they are unwilling to endorse the full extent of his ideas in *Laudato Si'*. The continuation of pre-established partisan lines reveals a more realistic limit on Francis's influence. While the pope and *Laudato Si'* became a significant rally cry for politicians seeking to promote their environmental agendas, for the most part, Francis does not cut across ideological lines. Indeed, a study by Pew Research Center found that after reading *Laudato Si'*, Americans who view themselves as Republicans were prone to be more skeptical with regard to the human cause for climate change than they were before.¹⁵⁸ Before *Laudato Si'* was released, Pew polling indicated that before *Laudato Si'*, 62% of American Catholics who identify as Democrats believed that climate change exists and that it is driven by human activity. In contrast, only 24% of Catholic Americans who identify as Republicans held the same beliefs. After reading or being exposed to *Laudato Si'*, Catholic Democrats were more likely to be concerned of the effects of climate change, but Catholic Republicans were less likely to do so than before. Interestingly enough, the same trend was true for non-Catholics, although Catholics did rate the pope's credibility higher than did non-Catholics. *Laudato Si'* appears to have a somewhat polarizing effect on some groups—strengthening convictions of the need to act against climate change of those on the left and

¹⁵⁷ The Politics and Elections Portal 2015, <http://2016.presidential-candidates.org/Cruz/?on=environment>, Goode, The New York Times 2016, https://www.nytimes.com/2016/05/21/science/donald-trump-global-warming-energy-policy-kevin-cramer.html?_r=0, Zaru, CNN 2016, <http://www.cnn.com/2016/03/11/politics/marco-rubio-climate-change/>

¹⁵⁸ Darby, Climate Home 2016, <http://www.climatechangenews.com/2016/10/25/popes-climate-message-did-not-sway-us-republicans-study/>

further cementing skepticism of those on the right. In summary, partisan influence, at least in the United States, is prevalent among Catholics and it reinforces their predetermined beliefs and acts as an obstruction to the lobbying of their pope. Despite the presence of stubbornly-convinced politicians and citizens of both ideologies, several parties seem to have been genuinely affected by Francis and his encyclical. It is in these groups that Francis's ability to encourage ideas and influence leaders appears to be the strongest.

The Authentic Supporters

Horacio Cartes and Rafael Correa (the presidents of Paraguay and Ecuador) have interesting political backgrounds. Cartes is a conservative and wealthy businessman and when he was elected to the presidency in 2013, there were mass complaints that he bought votes. During the campaign, he promised his electorate that he would bring economic growth to the country.¹⁵⁹ Although one could argue that Cartes's desire to free destitute Paraguayans from poverty agrees with Francis's message concerning the dignity of the poor, the Paraguayan president certainly did not make sustainable energy production or emission mitigation focal points in his campaign. In short, President Cartes had never publicly cared about climate change policy before Francis visited. There is a similar lack of environmental action in Ecuador. With the Amazon rainforest, the Galapagos islands, and the Andes mountain range, Ecuador possess some of the most pristine natural reserves on the planet. The Ecuadorian economy is at odds with the multitude of sensitive ecosystems—the country is heavily reliant on mining and oil (particularly because of their membership in OPEC). Correa was elected as a member of the Ecuadorian leftist party and had promised to safeguard sensitive land. Campaign commitments aside, his commitment to climate preservation is not ironclad. Correa once sought to ban drilling in the oil-rich Yasuni National

¹⁵⁹ Romero, The New York Times 2013, <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/04/22/world/americas/horacio-cartes-wins-paraguays-presidential-election.html>

Park by soliciting international aid to offset the conditional drop in profit. However, when he failed to receive what he considered to be a sufficient amount of money, he authorized oil and gas companies to develop the Yasuni land. During the months and weeks leading up to Francis's visit, Ecuadorian environmentalists increasingly criticized Correa and accused him of giving a higher priority to business and forsaking the promise he made to protect the environment.¹⁶⁰

In spite of the lack of pro-environment action on behalf of Cartes and Correa, both of these men cited *Laudato Si'* explicitly at COP 21. Francis's visits with the presidents appears to have had an impact. After the pope's visit to Paraguay, Cartes proclaimed that Francis had left the country "full of ideas and suggestions" concerning economic justice and environmental stewardship and that Francis's words are "[seeds] that we all have a responsibility to make sprout, grow, and prosper." Additionally, Cartes urged "all political leaders, entrepreneurs, businessmen, farmers, young people, and women to embrace the Holy Father's words, and to renew our conviction towards achieving economic development with a human face, that takes people and the environment into consideration."¹⁶¹ Correa's praise for Francis was more or less proportionate to Cartes's. During Francis's visit, Correa spoke to the public and frequently quoted from *Laudato Si'*. During this speech, Correa hailed Francis as a "gigantic moral authority" and praised him for his "determination to combat the injustice in the world and to correct a globalized economy that serves profit more than people" and his commitment to protecting "our common home."¹⁶² These statements do not necessitate political change by themselves. They do not guarantee that Cartes will take more robust action to enact

¹⁶⁰ Voice of America 2015, <http://www.voanews.com/a/ecuador-is-prime-example-at-heart-of-popes-climate-stance/2847703.html>

¹⁶¹ Quoted in Vatican Radio 2015, http://en.radiovaticana.va/news/2015/07/17/paraguayan_president_pope_left_message_full_of_ideas/1159012

¹⁶² O'Connell, The Jesuit Review 2015, <http://www.americamagazine.org/content/dispatches/francis-calls-dialogue-ecuador-where-he-given-triumphant-welcome>

environmental policies or that Correa will stand up to the business interests in his country. Similarly, Cartes and Correa's citation of the pope at COP 21 does not necessarily make their commitment to climate change mitigation policy any stronger. A lack of assurances for future action aside, when compared to the rest of the international community, these actions stand out.

President Obama praised *Laudato Si'* because it was complementary to his policy agenda. Rick Santorum criticized the encyclical because it disagreed with his. Both reacted to *Laudato Si'* even though they both did not have specific reasons to do so. Admittedly, Correa did campaign partially on a pro-environmental platform and Cartes does not have a reason *not* to praise the head of the Catholic Church. In addition, the ideas that Ecuador and Paraguay communicated at COP 21 were not altogether very different from the ones they communicated at COPs 18 and 20. Nonetheless, through their endorsement of *Laudato Si'*, both after Francis's visit and in Paris, they displayed an extent of papal influence that was unmatched anywhere else. Although Correa and Cartes may not have read the entire encyclical and become fervent believers of every word, their support of Francis and *Laudato Si'* appears to be a somewhat genuine reaction to Francis's promotion. In comparison to the predictable pattern of praise for *Laudato Si'* by climate change supporters and opponents, this particular papal influence is palpable and powerful.

IV. Influence Conclusions

One of the easiest ways to measure power and influence is to describe, accurately and consistently, the type of effects that some thing, person, or organization can cause. Because of his athleticism, vision and intelligence, NBA point guard Chris Paul has averaged 9.9 assists per

game over the course of twelve seasons and more than 800 games.¹⁶³ Because of his skill in negotiating with Congress, President Lyndon Johnson passed more laws during his first term than any president had for many years—despite taking over in the middle of President Kennedy’s presidency. Excluding JFK (who unfortunately spent less than his allotted time in office) Johnson vetoed the fewest bills since President Harding (1921-1923) and until President Bush (2001-2009). Furthermore, zero of his vetoes were overridden.¹⁶⁴ These accomplishments are easy to quantify and they succinctly describe the abilities of the person to whom they are attributed. Regrettably, the accomplishments of Pope Francis, specifically with regard to *Laudato Si’*, cannot be tallied in this way. Despite the scarcity of clear data points, several conclusions can be drawn from the pope’s venture into environmental politics.

In terms of absolute interest and global reach, *Laudato Si’* was unprecedentedly popular among papal documents. Many powerful men and women used Francis and his encyclical as a symbol to rally behind for the upcoming conference in France. While Francis seems to have further convicted left-leaning leaders and citizens of the importance of caring for the environment, it appears that he simultaneously pushed conservatives towards increased skepticism with regard to human-caused climate change. Although the groups that endorsed *Laudato Si’* were largely in favor of liberal environmental policy and the groups that dissented were largely climate change skeptics (or at least not supporters), some groups appear to have been authentically influenced by the Argentine pontiff. Through his connection to Latin American culture, embodiment of the poor and humble lifestyle, and active promotion of his encyclical, Francis affected a particularly powerful amount of regional influence. I assert that the takeaways of Francis’s influence are threefold: One: The ability to bring attention to an issue.

¹⁶³ Basketball Reference 2017, <http://www.basketball-reference.com/players/p/paulch01.html>

¹⁶⁴ U.S. Senate 2017, <https://www.senate.gov/reference/Legislation/Vetoes/vetoCounts.htm>

The level of attention that *Laudato Si'* received by the media and by the general public is impressive and (as I explained in the first chapter of this thesis) if one of Francis's main intentions in writing *Laudato Si'* is to spread awareness of the existence and danger of man-made climate change, he certainly succeeded. Two: The unique ability to establish himself (intentionally or not) as a moral talisman for environmental action. Many world leaders (many on the left, but some on the right as well) praised Francis and his message. They used his reputation to encourage environmental policy and we should not underestimate the value of an effective mouthpiece. Three: The ability to authentically influence world leaders. Pope Francis may not have the executives of the United States, China, or Russia in his pocket, but he appears to have exerted a real influence on several Latin American presidents and this level of impact is not negligible. These takeaways cannot give an exhaustive description of Pope Francis's power, but they do summarize his effects on environmental policy rather succinctly. He may not have led the NBA in assists, but Francis's standing as a moral authority on climate change and his ability to garner awareness and support of the Parisian conference undeniably impressive—and the record should show that he *is* an honorary Harlem Globetrotter.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶⁵ Bever, The Washington Post 2015, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/morning-mix/wp/2015/05/07/meet-the-newest-harlem-globetrotter-pope-francis/?utm_term=.952117ed7aa3

Chapter Six: The Legacy of the Green Book

The publishing and promotion of *Laudato Si'* was not the first time Pope Francis received global attention for getting involved in politics and it certainly will not be the last. His apostolic exhortation, *Amoris Laetitia* has already become a point of controversy among conservative members of the clergy—they are concerned that Francis's increased leniency of divorce and other relationship-centered issues threatens the integrity of Catholic marriage.¹⁶⁶ Although Francis's environmental contributions were not his last political project, they may be his most significant. When he published *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis presented thousands of countries, millions of people, and many world leaders with a powerful scientific and moral argument for the urgency of taking strong action to combat climate change. His encyclical received absolute and global popularity in unprecedented quantities and was met with much laud and praise—albeit primarily by those who had independently decided to support policy to fight climate change. In the six months before COP 21, Francis further spread his message by traveling to the Americas and Africa. He was received by gargantuan crowds and preached on the physical and social injustices brought about by climate change with powerful moral authority. Many ambassadors and heads of state heard Francis quote *Laudato Si'* in his speeches, and when the nations' representatives converged in Paris, the influence of his promotion was evident. Six countries referred to Pope Francis in front of the other world leaders at COP 21 and used his name and ideas as evidence of the importance of negotiating a strong agreement. The populations of the countries that cited Francis—Italy, the Vatican, Mauritius, Ecuador, Paraguay, and Guatemala—contain an above average percentage of Catholics. Ecuador, Paraguay, and

¹⁶⁶ Mirus, Catholic Culture 2015, <https://www.catholicculture.org/commentary/articles.cfm?id=674>

Guatemala, the Latin American Francis countries, connect with the pope on a level that extends beyond their religious affiliation.

Throughout his papacy and particularly during his trips abroad, Francis has consistently identified with the poor and marginalized. His condemnation of the exploitation of developing nations by wealthy businesses, his affirmation of the value of the poor and indigenous people, and even his simple dress resonate powerfully with the cultures of the Latin American Francis countries. These three nations have reason to connect with Francis—they are countries of low income, low levels of carbon emissions, and low energy production. Their societies are composed of the very people that are frequently hurt by climate change. Developed nations frequently utilize their land for production and then promptly withdraw—leaving the native citizens without jobs and the native land without resources. Their poverty prevents them from building the infrastructure necessary for sustainable development and energy production. Francis, in a way that no one else has, gave these people, and by extension, their governmental representatives, a voice. Through these actions, Francis noticeably influenced these nations, especially Ecuador and Paraguay. These two nations practically repeated the words from Francis's domestic speeches during COP 21. These phenomena expose the true power of the modern Catholic Church—to influence and garner support of ideas through their unique moral credibility.

The church no longer commands armies and it can no longer exercise political influence by refusing to annul a marriage or threaten excommunication. In lieu of such physical and political force, it does possess a unique moral influence that, if utilized optimally, can be extremely powerful. Francis has shown true command of this power. The base of this power rests in the billions of Catholics that practice the faith and, for the most part, respect their leader.

Additionally, because of the size of the church and the degree to which it is globally established, many other cultures and leaders hear and respect the pope's words. Francis shows that a pope must do more than inhabit the papal apartments to wield this power. When he and his administration released *Laudato Si'*, the power of Francis's ideas and the respect of his position resulted in a general praise of the encyclical. This natural reputation aside, the real strength of Francis's influence was catalyzed by his personality and his promotion of *Laudato Si'*. Through his travels and speeches, Pope Francis was able to bring his ideas to millions of listeners, numerous presidents and heads of state, several UN offices, including the headquarters in New York City, and the U.S. Congress. Through his embodiment of humility and simplicity, his advocacy of the moral obligation to care for the environment, and his embrace of the impoverished, Francis became, in the eyes of international leaders and common people, a morally irreproachable mouthpiece on climate change issues. With this combination of traits, Francis showcased the true strength of the church: its moral credibility.

Francis is not a scientist and he is not the president of a large nation.¹⁶⁷ Although he did consult extensively with experts, he has no previous experience with the intricacies of climate change policy. In short, there is no obvious reason that his words should carry credibility in a realm of scientific study. At the most fundamental level, people believe sources that they think are trustworthy. Usually, this trust is established with statistics or logical arguments or some other conventional method. Admittedly, *Laudato Si'* contains both statistics and logic. Still, the true strength of its credibility comes from the fact that people trust Pope Francis. Francis used *Laudato Si'* as a medium to deliver ideas, but the degree of support that his encyclical received must be attributed to a large extent to his personal charisma and promotional talent. Through the

¹⁶⁷ Reese, National Catholic Reporter 2015, <https://www.ncronline.org/blogs/ncr-today/does-pope-francis-have-masters-degree-chemistry>

ideas in his encyclical, his political skills, and his personality, Francis harnessed an immense level of support and greatly influenced world leaders—most notably in Latin America, where he is most able to identify with the native culture. The Catholic Church may be a religious institution, but Francis has shown that he and his church are capable of wielding considerable secular power, most recently by influencing global environmental policy.

It is important to note that Francis's ability to influence normal people and politicians alike, for the most part, did not cut across lines of political ideology. Those that were already left-leaning cited a deeper conviction of the need to take steps to protect the environment and those that leaned right before *Laudato Si'* was published appeared to maintain their stances of skepticism, ambivalence, or rejection. This partisan stubbornness suggests that the groups in which Pope Francis might influence the most change are those that did not already possess a cemented stance on the environmental spectrum. The actions that took place at COP 21 seems to confirm this idea. The nations that cited Pope Francis were developing nations; nations that I assert were not leading voices in the environmental policy arena. These more or less uncommitted nations were swayed most by Francis's encyclical and personal promotion. In this way, Francis's political action appears to have two main strengths: the ability to rally support from those that already were disposed to support environmental policy and to connect to undecided parties—especially if those parties are able to strongly identify with the pope's message and personality.

Additionally, on the internet and in newspapers, Francis has a powerful ability to generate interest. Because of the many articles mentioning the pope and searches for his encyclical, Pope Francis and *Laudato Si'* connected (superficially at the least) with millions of people across the globe. In this way, we can conclude that, in comparison to past popes and papal

works, Francis generated an extraordinary amount of attention for himself and his political agenda. I believe that the extent of Francis's (and his Church's) power could be better measured by further research that examines how people reacted once exposed to his ideas. We know that, on average, those that are left-leaning ascribed their deeper commitment to fighting the climate problem to *Laudato Si'* and the right-leaning tended to react with skepticism. However, we could gain an enormous amount of knowledge by answering the following questions: Will those that cited an understanding of the moral imperative to care for the environment take further action? Are they more likely to recycle religiously, purchase energy saving appliances, or speak about climate change to others? Would they attribute these actions to Pope Francis or *Laudato Si'*? For those in the middle: If they weren't sure about climate change before, did Francis convince them? Do they believe climate change is more serious now than they did before? How do they view the pope with regard to favorability and credibility? For the right-leaning: Do they believe Francis has less credibility after *Laudato Si'* than he did before? Which ideas in *Laudato Si'* do they reject? Do they find the science biased or the moral arguments irrelevant? I grouped these questions based on political ideology but it would be helpful to receive answers for all of them from a large sample. An extensive study that seeks to answer questions such as these would be extremely enlightening as to the specific influential power of Francis's prevalence in the media and in global popularity.

Clearly, the church does not have some sort of limitless lobbying power, and the effects of its influence can be difficult to measure. The immediate effects of *Laudato Si'* and Francis's promotion are easy enough to document and describe. Francis's encyclical was historically popular with regard to papal documents, received an enormous amount of praise from foreign leaders, and was mentioned several times at COP 21. The extended influence with regard to

environmental policy is harder to measure. This effect would most likely be most visible in countries that have already showed an inclination to be receptive to the pope's ideas. If Ecuador or Paraguay, neither of which have recently made any sort of environmental policy a priority, began to focus on this agenda or take active leadership within the community of the Paris Agreement, we may be able to attribute these actions in part to *Laudato Si's* impact. This case would be notably stronger if, in taking such actions, a president or organization head acknowledged the pope. Apart from an ideal outcome like this, the extent of Francis's influence on environmental policy (and the environment itself) will be somewhat unclear. The Paris Agreement could be successful or unsuccessful in its endeavors in many different magnitudes. The relevance of *Laudato Si'* may fade entirely or it may persist. A proper test of the effects of Pope Francis's influence needs more time to play out. Additionally, the future of environmental policy will be effected by many different leaders and organizations who may be entirely independent of the pope and his influence. While it may turn out to be the case that Francis had a lasting impact on environmental policy, any such evaluation is not possible at the present time and will likely be greatly complicated by future events. Nonetheless, we can conclude with certainty that Francis and *Laudato Si'* had a strong impact on the buildup to COP 21 and its subsequent negotiation of the Paris Agreement.

In 1540, St. Ignatius of Loyola founded the Society of Jesus and Ignatius and his followers became known as Jesuits.¹⁶⁸ The Jesuits are an order of priests who take vows of chastity, poverty, obedience to the pope, and dedication to bringing spirituality to people all over the globe. They are often utilized for missions of "global justice, peace, and dialogue".¹⁶⁹ Jorge Bergoglio, now Pope Francis, is a Jesuit. Judgements about the merits of his papacy aside,

¹⁶⁸ Jesuits, <http://jesuits.org/aboutus>

¹⁶⁹ Quoted in Jesuits

Francis undeniably embodies the spirit of poverty and global service on which his order was founded. The Argentine pontiff has embraced a man with thousands of tumors on his face, personally shopped for glasses in a Rome shopping center (despite his administration's urging that he allow the store owner to come to the Vatican), played a crucial role in the reestablishment of diplomatic relations between Cuba and the United States, and urged western European nations and the United States to accept refugees fleeing war and terrorism in Iraq and Syria.¹⁷⁰ More relevantly, he travelled across the world, visiting some of the poorest villages in South America, the halls of the U.S. Congress, and the headquarters of the United Nations. He promoted *Laudato Si'* by preaching to crowds of millions and by meeting with world leaders—often with hugs. Francis's meek spirit, unifying charisma, administrative competence, and political aplomb combined with the powerful and logical ideas of his encyclical *Laudato Si'* established the pope as a talisman for environmental policy—one whose moral credibility was unmatched. Francis wielded this moral credibility to spread his environmental message throughout the world and garner support for arguably the most important climate conference in history. Pope Benedict XVI may be called the green pope, but this title unquestionably belongs to the simply-dressed Jesuit from Argentina—the one with a green book and a humble heart.

¹⁷⁰ Karimi, CNN 2013, <http://www.cnn.com/2013/11/07/world/europe/pope-francis-embrace/>, Ohlheiser, The Washington Post 2015, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/acts-of-faith/wp/2015/09/04/here-comes-pope-francis-sneaking-out-of-the-vatican-to-buy-new-glasses/?utm_term=.23c3df8f250b, Yardley and Piangiani, The New York Times 2014, <https://www.nytimes.com/2014/12/18/world/americas/breakthrough-on-cuba-highlights-popes-role-as-diplomatic-broker.html>, Faiola and Birnbaum, The Washington Post 2015, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/refugees-keep-streaming-into-europe-as-crisis-continues-unabated/2015/09/06/8a330572-5345-11e5-b225-90edbd49f362_story.html?utm_term=.ca6b67dfe2a5

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Biography

Jack Buckley DiSorbo was born in Austin, Texas on July 17, 1995. After graduating from Kingwood High School in 2013, he enrolled at the University of Texas at Austin in the Plan II Honors Program and the Cockrell School of Engineering's Engineering Honors Program. While on campus, Mr. DiSorbo joined the Christian fraternity Beta Upsilon Chi, volunteered at the University Catholic Center, played goalkeeper for the university men's soccer team, and coached the local St. Francis middle school soccer team. In June of 2016, he travelled to Rome to study the modern papacy in a class taught by Professor Theriault, his thesis advisor. During his summers, he worked in the energy and chemical industries with Kinder Morgan, Hess, and Kaneka. He graduated from the University of Texas in 2017 and will attend Houston, Texas, or Georgetown Law School in the fall (once he makes up his mind) and hopes to pursue a career in public service. Mr. DiSorbo will intern for Kaneka Corporation in Houston, Texas this summer—assisting the intellectual property team within their legal department.